

Equal and Opposite

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Only Sirius and Bellatrix were still fighting. They didn't seem to have noticed the arrival of Dumbledore. Sirius ducked the red light that shot from Bellatrix's wand. He laughed and egged her on.

"Come on, surely you can do better than that!"

A second jet of red light hit Sirius on the chest. He only had time to adopt a surprised expression before he gracefully sank through the veil...

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Prologue

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Harry woke up with a start, his breath ragged, body slick with sweat. The unmistakable coppery taste of blood reached his bleary brain, his tongue throbbing sharply in his mouth. Grimacing, he looked over to his clock.

Three in the morning.

Head clearing slightly, he hung his legs off the side of the bed and walked over to the shared bathroom. Sidling up to the counter, he looked in the mirror and saw a worn and tired looking Harry Potter stare back at him.

Madam Pomfrey refused to give him more Dreamless Sleep potion, nor did Voldemort cease his relentless attacks on his mind, flooding his unconscious mind with the scent of death, the pain of pillaged homes, and the screams of burning mudbloods.

And when Harry thought he could finally sleep through the sight of tortured children falling under the onslaught of Death Eaters, the Dark Lord dredged up images of his murdered Godfather, simulating it

again and again through his mind until he woke up, resolving to never sleep again.

Studying Occulumenty turned out to be fruitless. Although he found himself with some skill in the art, the fundamental bond between them made any such deception easily overcome in his sleep.

Grabbing some extra clothes, he took a quick shower, relishing the cleansing spray against his body. He dressed and made his way to the common room, invisibility cloak and Marauder's Map in hand. This had become a nightly ritual for Harry lately. Whenever he couldn't sleep, he explored the massive castle that was Hogwarts.

He had quickly noticed that the map charted nowhere near the entire castle. Much of the ancient fortress was unused, abandoned and forgotten. Filthy hallways plunged in darkness held testaments to the past, sinister portraits lining the walls. Grimy floors were covered in a blanket of dust.

Harry had discovered many classrooms that hadn't seen humans in centuries, textbooks detailing forgotten, or, as Harry had quickly come to learn, illegal magic. The instruction of the Dark Arts had once been a part of Hogwarts, part of its shunned history. All that was left were the blocked off, boarded up rooms and hallways of years past.

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Stepping out of the portrait, he looked for any signs of his minder, activating the Marauder's Map and looking for the metamorphmagus the Order had assigned to him.

Tonks had been given the task of keeping an eye on him, mostly likely to make sure he didn't repeat his performance at the Department of Mysteries fiasco. Taking the form of an exchange student, she always lurked in the background, watching him.

Thankfully, she was still unaware of his activities of late and was blissfully asleep in the girl's dormitories.

Clearing the map, he made his way to the third floor. The third floor was the largest of all the floors, but it had for the most part been

abandoned. It held little in the way of classrooms, instead serving as storage. Placed half-hazardly in the halls were statues of fearsome vampires, dragons, and other such dark creatures. In a storeroom he had even come upon a life-sized sculpture of a dementor. He shuddered. The stone piece of art also replicated the vile creature's aura, albeit at a weaker level.

So it was with good reason Dumbledore had hidden the stone on this floor – it was dark, dusty, mostly unlit, and had enough twists and turns to rival the maze in the third task. One could easily get lost in the pitch black that dominated most of the area.

Ascending the stairway leading to the third floor, he stopped halfway and brought up his wristwatch.

3:13.

Leaning against the rail, he started tapping his feet impatiently, waiting. Seconds stretched to years as he stood there, gazing at the infinite blackness above. Annoyed, he spared another look at his timepiece.

3:14.

The stairway groaned as it moved, rotating itself until it connected with the shadowy Eastern Wing of the third floor. He had discovered this particular secret of the castle accidentally, witnessing it springing to life before his very eyes. The stairway was thought to never move, and was thus one of Neville's favorites. The mere fact that it moved at one precise moment implied something.

So, he had taken to discovering its secrets at every chance. The time that it chose to move was an amusing tribute to muggle mathematics – no doubt implemented by Rowena Ravenclaw herself.

Leaping quickly onto the landing, he watched as the stairway moved back to its original position. This had caused Harry to panic the first time he had come, thinking he was trapped there until the next day. Wandering through the unknown the entire night, he had found himself back on the second floor hours later after numerous twists

and turns that had him hopelessly lost. Tracing his steps back, he had come to a solid wall. Apparently it was only a one-way path.

Torches were nonexistent here, so he was forced to light his wand.

"Lumos!"

A thin beam of light burst out of his wandtip, dispelling the black shroud that cloaked the area.

Stepping forward, he started at a brisk pace, scanning his surroundings nervously. He had only been here a few times, and was still cautious. Many dangerous creatures thrived in the darkness, and this was the perfect place to live.

Not that anyone would miss him, of course. After Ron and Hermione had admitted their feelings for each other, Harry had become an irritation to them, a third wheel. They smiled at him, sure, and they still walked and studied together from time to time, but it wasn't the same. They had eyes only for each other and would gaze at him as if they held some kind of secret he wasn't privy to, almost pityingly.

But it went beyond pity.

Even with the barrier separating them, they still managed to question him casually on a day to day basis, as if nothing was wrong. Talk to him about his life, how he was feeling. It was with false cheer that they did so, empty and utterly meaningless, out of place in their usual behavior.

Almost forced.

Recognizing this, he had looked beyond the Golden Trio, searching for companionship with others.

He had failed, miserably.

Harry had realized that he truly did not have any friends besides Ron and Hermione. Growing up as he did, he clung on to the first two he got his hands on, and neglected to make more friends less Ron and Hermione get offended.

To Hogwarts, even though he had been there close to six years, he was still a distant figure to most. Even though he had instructed the D.A., he hadn't really bonded with anyone, shying behind his role as a teacher. Trying to converse with others, he had received odd looks of disbelief, their eyes flickering over to the other two thirds of the famed threesome.

It was then he had realized that he was truly alone.

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Passing a portrait of a mantichore slaughtering a village, Harry stopped. He hadn't seen this before...

The painting stood near the entrance of a passage. Stepping in, he was struck with a sense of age. The air hung heavy here, and he could feel the slight tingle of magic. Warily, he took a step ahead, wand at the ready.

Rough, bare granite walls extended forward several feet, but came to an abrupt end. No, it couldn't be pointless. Everything in the Castle had a purpose, held some secret. Studying the dull grey wall that ended the passageway, he discovered a faint outline. Moving closer, he traced the rectangular crack in the coarse rock with his hand. He blinked. It was a door.

A door? To where?

Curiosity overtook caution as he tried pushing on it without success. Casting a silencing charm on the entire corridor, he hit the rock in front of him with several unlocking charms without avail.

Furrowing his eyebrows, he contemplated the mysterious door. Had he not studied the wall up close, he would have passed off the cracks as natural. But they were too perfectly cut to be natural. What could possibly be behind it?

He decided to look around for clues. Perhaps the door had a hidden switch? He scanned the walls on his sides, looking for anything unusual.

There was nothing.

Turning around, frustrated, he noticed a slight shimmer at the edge of his vision. Stepping closer, he watched as the light bent slightly around the area. It was impossible to see unless you were looking for it. Focusing his eyes a bit, another portrait appeared, flickering into existence.

Shining his wand on it, he observed the newly revealed painting.

A snake, lion, badger, and an eagle guarded what seemed to be weapons, dark artifacts, and various treasures from a group of gathering students. He watched in fascination as a figure in black stepped away from the crowd and pushed in a hidden square block in the wall in front of the guards. The animals vanished and the students raided the treasures.

A smile graced his lips. It was ingenious. Looking back at the wall, he looked for a square block. He found it moments later. It seemed like it was only possible to see the block after viewing it in the painting. Reaching toward it, he pushed it in.

At first, nothing happened. But then a long groan sounded as he was rewarded with the door sliding back, revealing a pitch-black corridor.

Stepping forward, he brought his wand up to examine the place. It was a very narrow opening, as narrow as the door. The rock above him was low, a few inches above his head. Looking behind him one last time, he plunged in.

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Musky, moist air filled his lungs as he walked forward, every step kicking dust up in the air, visible in the wandlight. After a tense ten minutes of walking in complete silence, he reached a stairway. Quickly making his way downwards, he came upon a round antechamber.

The air here had cleared noticeably, lacking the oppressive quality the passageway above had. The stones were still moist, however, and the ground was just as damp.

The rock above formed a small dome, supported by several pillars placed in the edges of the room. Drops of water fell to the cold stone, the sound amplified by the structure of the antechamber.

He was under the lake.

Drawing his robes tighter, he looked around. There were nine hallways leading out of the antechamber, the entrances elaborate arches between the pillars. Each was identical to the others, including the one he had entered through. Seeing this, Harry took off his cloak and placed it at the entrance lest he get lost, the rainbow shimmering of the invisibility cloak being highly visible.

Bringing his wand up, he peered down the length of the nine hallways. Nearly all of them led downwards. The ninth however, ended a short distance away with a door. Not in the mood to walk anymore, he headed down the last one.

He came upon a heavy wooden door. It was completely blank with the exception of a carving near the top. Focusing the shaft of light on it, he studied the seemingly random marks on the wood. There were dots connected by lines. It looked like a constellation. Searching his mind, he recognized it.

The constellation of Gemini.

Unable to control his curiosity any longer, he pushed the door open and entered.

Stepping into the pitch-blackness, he looked around cautiously, checking for any danger. The stupidity of his whole situation hit him at that moment. He was walking into an unknown, dark area that was guarded against to ensure the student's safety. Alone.

Perhaps Snape was right, he was arrogant and brash.

But he wasn't about to leave now, go back to sleep, back the screams, the pain, the death and carnage.... Taking a deep breath, he summoned all his famed Gryffindor courage and took a step ahead.

Reinforcing his light with yet another whispered '*lumos*', he continued, wand lighting the darkness around him in a circle of dull-grey, paved stone. He moved shakily forward, checking his surroundings until he felt the darkness lighten up ahead. Continuing at an increased pace, he noticed small candles that began to line the walls on either side of him. Extinguishing his light, he walked on.

Suddenly, he stepped out of the corridor into a small chamber, half the size of a classroom. It was lit by a few weakly flickering candles.

But there was one glimmer that penetrated the darkness in the damp room, an unnatural shard of light that caught his attention. He took a sharp breath as he recognized the object at the back of the room. The ornate gold feet, the tall, lustrous gold frame - and of course, the glass. The luminous glass reflected nothing at the moment, its surface a rippling silver mass.

"*Erised*," he whispered.

The mirror gleamed, as if in response.

He stood there for a few moments, in disbelief. But he felt a deep longing, an almost carnal need to see what *Erised* would show him now. He stepped forward, wondering what he would see now, five years after his initial encounter. *His parents. Or, perhaps, Sirius. Yes, definitely Sirius...*

But as Harry stepped forward, his heart pounding in his chest, he saw —

Nothing.

Emerald eyes stared back at him, reflecting his confusion, disbelief. Remembering what Dumbledore had said, he was sure that he was not the happiest man in the world.

So why was it showing him without any desires? He ran his hand through his hair in frustration. He watched as his reflection did the same. Heart still pounding, he took a closer look at the mirror, studying its frame, the glass, its back. As he walked back to the front

of it, he realized something. *The words around the frame weren't the same.*

Immediately his wand was in his hand, clenched tightly in his fist.

This wasn't the Mirror of Erised.

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Moving toward the mirror carefully, he traced his hand along the words around the frame.

Erised had the inscription '*Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi*'. In reverse, it read '*I show not your face but you hearts desire.*'

This mirror, however, read '*Etisoppo dna lauqe esoht tub dlrow ro ecaf ruoy ton woshi*'

Harry reversed the words in his head.

"I show not your face or world but those equal and opposite," he read, voice soft. Equal and Opposite? He walked back in front of the mirror and froze.

Where the mirror reflected him before stood a girl. A rather beautiful one at that. He stood there gaping. The girl had long black hair, creamy white skin, and *emerald* eyes. Even stranger was the fact that the girl was not mimicking his actions. In fact, she was standing there, her arms folded, an amused look on her face. On her forehead was...the scar. The same lighting bolt scar that marked his forehead was also present on the girl's, albeit much lighter and nearly invisible. Oddly enough, it seemed to *add* to her beauty, rather than detract from it.

'Equal and Opposite...?'

The girl stepped forward, placing her hands on the mirror, her emerald eyes gleaming with eagerness. Eyes so much like his own, yet different. They were as green as his, but were nowhere near as hesitant.

Harry unconsciously stepped forward, putting his hands on the glass, covering the girl's.

The glass gave off a soft ripple. He felt the glass grow warm under his palms, becoming softer. Looking back up at the girl, he saw a curious expression on her face, one that was suddenly replaced by determination. Her hands *came alive*, locking into his. The glass rippled around her fingers, sending off little waves. He felt himself pull her from the mirror. The girl came through and looked at her surroundings. Letting his hands go, she stepped up to him and gave him a searching gaze.

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Harry stared back in shock, unable to think.

The girl gave a soft melodious chuckle that broke Harry from his stupor. He tightened his hand on his wand, stepping back. Harry saw a deep hunger in her eyes, like a huntress gazing at her prey.

"Who...who are you?" Harry managed, face one of suspicion. His scar was giving off a curious buzz, albeit a pleasant one...

The girl gave him one of his own lop sided grins before answering.

"I...am you."

Harry blinked. Him? Sure, she looked like a bit like him, she even had the trademark scar, but he was male. The figure in front of him clearly was not.

She seemed to pick up on this. Giving him a disturbing predatory smile, she stepped forward, eyes shining in anticipation.

"I am you, your equal and opposite," she whispered. As she placed her hand on his cheek, he stiffened. She ignored him and started caressing the side of his face.

"So beautiful..." she murmured, eyes raking over his face and body, startling Harry. He blushed deeply. He'd never thought of himself

as...well, anything. He was never one to comment on beauty, let alone himself.

She smiled at his blush. She looked up, emerald eyes meeting perfect replicas. Harry felt distinctly uncomfortable as they searched him, seemingly reaching into his soul, uncovering his every secret. Her hot breath brushed over his face, causing him to shiver. Noticing this, she smirked and brought her other hand up, holding his face in both hands. She leaned in, whispering into his ear.

“So sad, so defeated...what have they done to what’s mine?” she breathed. Harry shivered again at her use of the possessive. She pulled away and started walking around him, hands brushing over his body. She took his arm, and brought it up to her face. Pulling the sleeve back, she traced the scar made by the basilisk with a single finger slowly, taking in all the details. The contact was sending tingles throughout his body and his heartbeat quickened. Cocking her head, she dropped it and put her arms on Harry’s chest.

Leaning forward, she put her ear against his heart and closed her eyes. Harry felt the warmth of the body pressed up against him, so familiar, yet so different. It was...*comfortable* in a way he couldn’t put his finger on. Harry’s other self had apparently noticed too, as she pressed herself tighter against his body. She had closed her eyes, basking in the warmth provided by him. They both stood there pressed against each other, breaths synchronized, hearts beating simultaneously.

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Harry felt a haze come over his mind. He felt lost in the warm feeling that enveloped his mind and body. He welcomed it, letting it wash over him. But something like fear started to wind through the haze, penetrating his mind. Something like *whats happening who what where when why* - and Harry pulled away, not suddenly, but gradually, his mind and body slowed by the thick fog that blanketed his senses.

The girl, his *other* self, looked up at Harry, looking slightly put out at losing Harry’s proximity. Her face changed into the familiar hunger, the animalistic desire he had seen before. But something new filled her eyes, something that made Harry more than a little nervous.

Lust.

She moved forward again, pushing Harry into the wall with almost supernatural strength. Harry was too startled to do anything to retaliate, so he looked on as she placed her hands on his waist, slipping them under his shirt, warm digits dancing across his chest. Harry melted into her ministrations with a slight moan. It should have been impossible that her simple touch could have affected him so much...

She leaned in again, this time nibbling at the bottom of his ear before moving onto his neck. She could feel his heart rate increasing, his breath irregular. She stopped slowly, almost lazily and looked into the eyes of her counterpart, taking in the sigh that he gave when she had reached the nape of his neck.

"Beautiful," his counterpart murmured again and she pressed up against him once more. She moved her lips over his gently, softly brushing back and forth, back and forth until Harry was dizzy.

He felt the haze taking over his senses once again, enveloping him in a warm blanket. It was like a missing toy long gone that had been returned. He felt complete, more than complete, content. But the fear returned, once again worming through the dull barrier that surrounded his mind. He broke off the kiss, looking at the flushed face of his other.

"Wha...what are you doing?" he managed, his breath ragged. Why was his voice so husky?

She gave him a mysterious smile, and replied in her captivating musical voice.

"Why, I'm kissing you of course," she said matter-of-factly. She pressed herself against Harry once more, her pelvis grinding into his. He felt himself responding to her touch.

Somehow, he couldn't bring himself to care anymore.

Her face lit up at his response, and she attacked his lips with a new fervor.

She placed a hand on his scar and traced it back and forth. The normally painful mark was extremely sensitive, and the touch from his other sent tingles of pleasure throughout his body. He moaned again in her lips, before breaking off once more.

Withdrawing, he found himself on top of his other, sprawled on the ground. She stared back at him, pupils dilated, her breath ragged. Harry was suddenly turned over, finding himself on the bottom. His counterpart captured his mouth in another fierce kiss, sending his mind back into the haze.

She pressed herself against him tightly, enveloping both of them in the beckoning warmth. Her lips still locked into his, she moved her hands through his messy hair, massaging his scalp and rubbing behind his ears. Harry closed his eyes against the sensations.

She was on him again in an instant, mouth hard and hot on his, his hands fumbling with her clothing. Harry was borne back to the ground by her slight weight; she laughed breathlessly and pulled at his hair, yanking his face up and plunging her tongue into his mouth. The excitement shivered along his skin, and Harry felt himself pulling her closer, hands pulling at her back, pressing her mounds against his chest as she lay on top of him. She groaned into her mouth, grinding against him.

Then he was in her, hard and hot and pulsing inside her, deep ragged thrusts on the edge of pain. Emerald eyes locked into each other as she slid against him, her hands on either side of his head, dark black hair a curtain around his face. The sensation was incredible, trickling down from his scar and tearing through his body. Soon his other was shuddering against him, skin flushed. She pressed her lips against his mouth, bucking weakly as pleasure ripped through them, tipping them into oblivion.

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Harry awoke hours later, something warm in his arms. He was sitting against the wall, with his other straddling his waist, arms and legs wrapped around him. Her head was nestled deep into his neck, hair falling over his chest. Their damp, bare bodies were covered in a hastily conjured rough blanket.

He sighed in contentment, numb in the warm haze. It was more intense however, unlike before. It wasn't the towering highs of an orgasm, nor was it the electrifying pleasure of the Dark Arts. It was like being smothered in a blanket of euphoria, belonging, and freedom. Tightening his hold on his counterpart, his other, his self, he fell back into peaceful slumber.

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When he opened his eyes again, he felt empty, but oddly at peace. She was gone. Looking back at the mirror, he caught the flowing of a cloak and billowing ebony hair before it disappeared behind a tall wooden door.

Getting up, he picked up his wand, moving to the neat stack of clothes on his left. On top of it sat a short note written in elegant writing, opposite of his own. Reading it, he smiled.

Putting on his clothes, he took one last look at the mirror before he left, shutting the door behind him.

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Harry stumbled into the Common Room just as Ron and Seamus had finished a game of Exploding Snap. Taking one look at his flushed face, Ron chuckled.

"Well, you had a good night. Who was it?" he asked, amused. Harry's eyes got a far off look and he gave a small smile.

"Someone who understands," he replied. And with that, he went into the dorm for a few more hours of sleep. Ron and Seamus looked at each other puzzled.

Because in the end, only Harry Potter could ever understand Harry Potter.

A/N: Edited to make the sex scene less juvenile and take out the 'I-miss-Sirius' bawling.

Chapter 1: Frustration

Harry looked down on the doe eyed Hufflepuff beneath him, frustrated. Hannah Abbot was lost in ecstasy, looking dreamily at the ceiling, breathing heavily.

Sneering in disgust, he left her there naked, putting on his clothes and leaving the empty classroom without closing the door. He didn't care if the slut got caught. The shame would be enough to keep her mouth shut.

The days had not been good to Harry, with his other abandoning him like a common *dog*. They had enjoyed their weekly, sometimes nightly trysts for close to a month, before she suddenly stopped coming.

He had waited for hours the following day, and the next, and the next, desperately hoping she would return.

No more notes, no more promises, no more whispers of things to come in his ears.

She had ruined him.

He hated her, *loathed* her for what she had done.

The pain of loss was horrendous, and it tore at him from the inside. The very last thing he had in the world was taken away from him. His friends didn't matter, he had none. His possessions were worthless – he had enough money to buy them a hundred times over.

He had nothing left.

And now, his frustration was getting the better of him.

In his rage, his thirst for revenge, his anger, he had pushed himself into his studies, searching for some way to surpass *her* in power, to someday have his way with her. He had discovered much in the way

of older, darker forbidden knowledge, most in the forgotten small libraries he had found in the shadowy corridors of Hogwarts Castle.

Useful curses, spells, charms all were filed away.

He found tomes in the other rooms branching from the antechamber, dark artifacts, and locked doors he spent entire nights trying to open. Knowledge became his obsession, far surpassing Hermione in zeal.

What did he have left? There was nothing to be lost, only power to be gained.

Dumbledore would look worriedly upon him, McGonagall frowning when he walked by. The old man knew something was off; he was perceptive as always. McGonagall knew from the headmaster, being his little bitch got you tidbits of information after all. But the other teachers, clueless as always, praised him, showering him with complements.

He strove to become better, better than *her*.

And someday, yes, someday he would cross the mirror, give his revenge. He would take her against the wall, brutally.

Just not yet. He would not dive into the unknown underpowered. He would not lose. Not to her.

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Stepping out of the passageway, Harry pressed his foot against the block, causing the door to slide back shut with a loud groan. Casting a disillusionment charm on himself, he moved quickly away, back to the Room of Requirement.

He placed all his extra reading material in the room, hiding it away from prying eyes. He couldn't take it with him to Gryffindor Tower less they be discovered. He knew for a fact Tonks went through his things.

The whole Order treated him carefully, and would watch him as if he would burst at any second.

Harry, despite the prophecy, had been blocked off from the Order “...in the interest of your mental health.”

Ron and Hermione were in as well, but refused to tell him anything. At first he had been angry, as he had felt betrayed. But later on, he had come to recognize their usefulness. They reported on him, and his ‘mental state’. He could show them what he wanted them to see, and influence the Order’s opinion of him.

This had continued for some time, but Hermione, most likely jealous of his rising grades and suspicious of his association with the other houses had said something to the Order. Catching him wandering at night had alerted her even more.

This had led to his invisibility cloak taken away and Tonks being assigned to “guard detail”. Taking the form of an exchange student, she had taken to tailing him around. Though she was an Auror, Harry easily lost her when he moved through the castle. Hearing no reprimand from Dumbledore, he had surmised that the young metamorphmagus was too proud to admit her failure.

Not that it bothered him.

It wouldn’t do well at all for him to be seen. His minders were suspicious enough.

They tried hard to talk to him, to get information on his state. Tonks would sidle up to him at odd times, chattering about nonsense to catch him off guard. Hermione, despite her running off to Dumbledore and telling him of his wandering, still spoke to him as if nothing had happened between them.

Ron, thankfully, was too stupid and simpleminded to do anything useful, being led away from his questionings by the simple mention of ‘quidditch’ or ‘food’.

So it was with great surprise that he sensed he was being followed.

Looking behind him, he saw nothing. The seventh floor stood empty, the fearsome armors standing still, the portraits sleeping quietly.

An invisibility cloak, most likely his.

Focusing his eyes a bit, he saw through it, revealing a flustered Tonks trying her best to tail him silently, pressed against the wall.

Harry suppressed the urge to curse her on the spot. He would be exposed if he didn't take action. While the Room of Requirement was powerful, it could not refuse a direct order from the Headmaster of Hogwarts.

She would have to be silenced...but how?

He could obliviate her, but Dumbledore would recognize the remnants in a passive legilimency scan. She reported to him every twenty four hours, and that wasn't long enough for the mind to completely settle.

No, she would have to withhold this information voluntarily.

An idea struck him in that instant.

He strayed from his initial path and took a shortcut to the fourth floor, where he knew Filch was patrolling.

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Tonks looked at the quickly retreating figure of her charge.

Harry had grown through the year, reaching a respectable height and filling out some. His hair was as messy as ever, and his eyes were no longer hidden behind the round glasses. He was, quite simply, devastatingly gorgeous, and it showed.

He was seen flirting with various girls, and Tonks could tell by the way they looked at him that there was more than just friendly chatter going on.

She couldn't help but feel a little jealous.

But no matter how hard she tried to get into the group, they all silenced themselves once she got too close. Something was going on with the boy-who-lived, and she would find out.

Increasing her pace to match Harry, she thought about his behavior so far.

The sixth year was constantly charming people, making friends, and smiling his superficial smile. He would give gifts to the influential, and make allies out of former enemies. It looked quite touching, the hardy Gryffindor being bold and making new friends, conquering the lines separating the houses.

But Tonks was a metamorphmagus, and appearances had always been her specialty, physical or not. She had learned to study people, and gauge their actions in case she would ever have to take their form. And so, it was a shocking conclusion that Harry Potter was a slimy, slippery Slytherin.

He hadn't always been this way, of course. The Order had trained him over the summer at Grimmauld Place. Harry had been much his normal self with the exception of the sad, wistful smile that he held in place, a remnant of Sirius's death.

Something had happened to him during the year.

Coming up the steps with a silencing charm at her feet, she watched as he moved down the hallway.

A periodic clunking noise caught her ear as she followed. Looking around, she caught sight of a cat. Lamp-like, yellow eyes peered at her from a skeletal frame.

Mrs. Norris.

And where Mrs. Norris was, Filch was soon to follow.

Looking around for her charge, she swore silently. He had disappeared.

The clunking noise increased in volume, and she found herself looking for a broom closet to go hide in. Auror or not, she was still undercover as a student here and would be subject to any detentions brought against her.

Spotting one nearby, she ducked inside as Filch turned the corner.

Closing it silently, she moved backwards, stepping away from the door. However, as she went, she was met with something firm behind her.

Two arms snaked around her waist, pulling her close, a whisper filling her ear.

“Stay still, and be quiet!” the male voice said, his hot breath brushing her neck softly.

She squirmed in his arms and looked upwards, meeting a pair of beautiful green eyes.

“Harry?” she asked, confused. A low, drawn out hum confirmed her suspicions. Before she could get free, however, Filch walked by the door, his shadow visible under the door.

She held her breath, leaning back into the embrace, remembering all the times she had fled from the caretaker, going off with late night escapades with her boyfriends...it had been an enjoyable time. She missed the partying, the wild escapades they went on, the drunken fun they would have in the astronomy towers...

A hand slipping under her robes shook her from her reverie. She froze as the hot flesh went under her blouse, rubbing her stomach softly.

She shook off the temporary stupor and struggled against the tightening hand keeping her in place, making a small amount of noise.

“Is there someone there...?” Filch’s voice rang out through the floor. Tonks stopped again, forced to endure the violation.

She gritted her teeth, as the other hand slipped in as well, coming around her back, rubbing her slightly clammy skin. They slithered all over, coiling around her, as a mouth pressed itself against her neck, sucking slightly.

The hands moved upwards, as did the biting kisses, moving up to her chin. She tried, she *tried*, she tried to get away, but her body wanted this, wanted to be consumed.

What had gotten into Harry? He had never been like th...

Her thoughts trailed off one hand cupped her breast, squeezing slightly. She gasped in surprise, before clamping it shut. What was she to do? It was either getting caught by Filch, or getting *bitten* by this...this Slytherin. This snake charmer...

A hand reached under her panties, cupping her arse. She stiffened at the touch, her breath catching in her throat as the kisses trailed lower, around her jawbone, down her neck. His hands squeezed again, and wove around her once more.

This...this serpent *thing* had her and she was losing, she was giving in...but...but it felt so *good*. But he was young...and, and...

Her argument faded away as the venomous mouth clamped at the base of her throat, and the hands slithered around her chest, up, over, around, and down into her folds.

She sighed slightly, and made one last weak protest.

"Har...Harry...Don...Don't do this..." she was silenced by a mouth crushing her lips, slipped her tongue.

Oh...it was bliss. His warm tongue entered hers, swirling around her mouth, fiddling with her teeth, lapping away at her own tongue...a long drawn out hiss bore into her, tickling her throat, the vibrations going into her very core...

She felt herself slipping away...how had he learned this? He was just a snot nosed ki-...another hiss, a...a snake, the...he was a parseltongue, that's what it was...*hisssss*

His fingers sped their pace, worming their way into her...

Hissss

...she felt weak in her knees, slightly delirious from the lack of oxygen...

Hissss

...everything was so good, and his fingers reached even deeper...

Hissss

...the world was swaying but she didn't care, just some more...just a little bit more...

And it stopped.

Her eyes snapped open. The hands were missing, her blouse unbuttoned and her robes disheveled.

Where was he?

She looked around frantically, breathing heavily.

The door was open, and she caught a flutter of a cloak before it disappeared from sight.

He was gone.

A flushed Nymphadora Tonks slid to the floor, frustrated. She slammed her fist into the ground.

Damn him.

.....

Harry moved away from the closet as quickly as he could, elated in his success.

He headed toward the Fat Lady, taking off his cloak and giving the password before entering.

Harry had reclaimed his cloak and ensured that Tonks would keep her mouth shut about the incident. The Auror wouldn't dare mention his stroll last night to Dumbledore. Doing so would bring up memories of him *molesting* her, powerful memories that Dumbledore was bound to detect, her weak shields or not. Tonks knew this as well.

She should have, anyways. She taught him Occlumency during the summer.

.....

Dressing the next day, he mussed up his hair and went down to breakfast.

Harry arrived late on purpose – Dumbledore would miss him in the throng of students arriving before the bell. He needed to confirm that his secret was safe.

He chanced a glance at Dumbledore once he was sure the old man was looking at him.

Nothing out of the ordinary.

Good, Tonks had kept her silence.

Taking a seat near the middle of the table, he smoothed his robes and filled his plate.

Looking over at the metamorphmagus, he saw her talking to Hermione. Meeting his glance, she blushed deeply and looked away, fidgeting slightly. A sadistic smile lit his lips.

Grabbing the goblet in front of him, he took in her appearance, missing it in the dark of the broom closet. Black hair, blue eyes, and creamy white skin. She looked a lot like...*Jamie*.

But she didn't compare.

Tonks had been too limp in his hand, too easily led around. Just like that dopey Hufflepuff, Abbot. After his counterpart, he had longed for something comparable.

But he had failed.

The pleasure, the connection between them, her fire...it was unmatched.

She had spoiled him well, and he could no longer find any satisfaction from anyone else. Hannah had been a miserable lay, orgasming early, and sitting back like a limp fish.

The same with all the others he had sampled. He had to do all the work, while they sat there. Neither had the drive that Jamie had. She fit him perfectly, they were beautiful together.

But she had stood him up.

He scowled, his magic reacting to his emotions. He felt a tingling sensation at his fingertips, but he ignored it. The little harlot had dared to keep him waiting.

No doubt she was dancing around with some unappreciative bastard, smirking her ghostly smirks, playing him like a flute with her hands. Oh, how he wished to smother her...wrap his hands around her throat and curse her into oblivion.

His goblet gave a shudder, the pumpkin juice swaying dangerously to its tip.

But she was *strong*. A budding Dark Lady, Jamie was ruthless bitch, much like Bellatrix Lestrange, whom she had tortured and eviscerated at the Ministry a year before. The Queen of Slytherin House, she tortured her housemates, manipulating and playing them all against each other.

Just like she did you...

He tightened his grip on the goblet.

He would be stronger. He could take her, crush her in his hands...

The dishes shook, and his tablemates looked at him oddly, his eyes staring into infinity with a strange glint in them.

Yes...he would turn her game against her. He would need power...power to beat her to submission...to make her pay.

Harry's magic surged in his arm, and he crushed the golden goblet in his hand, the liquid pouring over the table.

She would be *his*.

.....

A/N: A lot of the background seen in the preview has been edited so I can make it more drawn out.

Review!

Amerision

Chapter 2: Of Deals and Desires

Harry stood in front of the mirror, his obsession, his bane.

The glass rippled slightly as it showed the world of his equal and opposite, seemingly exactly the same as his own – only the room was empty, devoid of the figure Harry longed to see.

It had been far too long, he supposed. Now two months he had been without any contact with her. His anger had stilled somewhat, but the resolve remained. When the time came, Jamie would pay dearly.

He dreamed of it often, curling his rough fingers around her bare, silky smooth throat, causing lovely purple bruises...outlining his cruel touch on her porcelain skin, marking her as his.

It was a fantasy he played over and over in his mind, altering, changing, revising, and living through day and night.

Once he had reduced her to gasping, he would deny her the gift of oxygen, crushing his lips against hers, drowning her in kisses...fear, fear in her emerald eyes, powerlessness that she had always enforced on him, dominating and leaving him a mess.

And then he would take her painfully, without remorse, bring her to the brink and back, deny her the release of death until he deemed her ready.

If ever.

It was horribly ironic really, that he would kill her in passion, the way she did him.

It was, after all, her fault. She had done this to him. And what goes around comes around.

Pressing his hands against the icy surface one last time, he pushed slightly in the faint hope that it would let him through.

The tall frame tilted backwards as he did so, resisting his efforts.

Nothing.

Harry withdrew his hands and returned to the large tome lying near his feet.

Every night he tried to get through, studying its features, looking it up in the library, the restricted section, and the various tomes that littered the rooms branching from the antechamber.

Of the few chambers he had opened, he had come across this particular book, an encyclopedia of ancient magical artifacts and their uses.

Old and worn, it was kept together solely by a preservation charm.

“...the Mirror of Erised is a part of a larger collection of works by Cleopatra the Enchantress. So enamored with herself, the Egyptian queen built nine of these mirrors, each showing her with different premises.

Of the nine, only three have been located and classified:

The Mirror of Erised – Shows the viewer their deepest desires

The Mirror of Reaf – Shows the viewer their greatest fears

The Mirror of Etisoppo – Shows the viewer as they were equal and opposite

Each has the potential to drive the viewer insane, as shown by Cleopatra’s dwindling sanity in the last years of her life...”

His eyes flickered down to a footnote that had been hastily scrawled in at the bottom of the page.

“...Currently missing, the Mirror of Etisoppo disappeared from its home years ago during the Goblin Rebellion of 995, where it was being kept under study by Roman Sorcerers in England based near Scotland. Their research was never completed, but was published

nonetheless in the last journal for experimental dark magic called Magicus decades later."

Looking over at the mirror, he had no doubt as to who had stolen it and kept it here for 'safekeeping'.

At 995, Hogwarts was almost completed, and the founders at the height of their power. They would have no problem keeping the possibly dangerous mirrors in the newly built fortress.

But Magicus?

He would have to get his hands on it somehow. It would no doubt be a rare and forbidden object, peddled by the likes of Borgins and Burkes.

But how would he leave the castle?

.....

The memory charm really was a useful piece of magic.

"*Obliviate!*"

Ron blinked for a moment, his expression blanking within seconds.

"You did not see Harry Potter walk by. Harry Potter was sleeping in his dorm the entire night and you are wasting time patrolling the corridors looking for him." Thinking for a moment, he added, "And you think Hermione is a nosy, ugly bitch and you deserve better. Like Lavender."

Leaving a disoriented Ron Weasley standing in the hallway, Harry walked away quickly before the redhead could regain his bearings.

But it just didn't compare to the Imperius Curse. The memory charm, while able to create memories and make subtle suggestions, held no candle to the unforgiveable.

It was a shame how he couldn't cast it really.

Hogwarts had unforgivable and heavy Dark Arts alarms tied to the wards, tracking their signatures. The Ministry had attempted to do such a thing, but lacked the power to support them over such a wide area.

But it was possible to dissociate oneself from the alarms. All you needed was a simple charm based on a record of your signature. Finding your magical signature was notoriously difficult, however, and was usually done at the wandmaker's shop. Ollivander would subtly record a copy of the signature using various spells during the wand selecting process.

Harry had no such knowledge of these spells, as they were kept confidential to prevent the removal of the tracking charms.

He doubted he could break into the Ministry like last time.

But if he could...that would make things so much easier.

It was a hassle memory charming Ron and Hermione every time they went looking for him when they noticed he wasn't asleep. He could just put them under the Imperius.

But no, Dumbledore would find out at their next meeting. The headmaster was notoriously observant, and would detect the subtle change in behavior immediately.

Still, it could be used on some of the lesser players in Hogwarts Castle.

Perhaps he could get the signature indirectly?

.....

"Alohomora!"

The library doors unlocked with a 'click'.

Waving his wand at the door, he silenced the hinges.

After a brief glow from the rusted iron, he grabbed the long bronze handle and twisted it, pulling the door open.

The characteristic groan that accompanied the poorly maintained entrance was absent, a necessity after curfew.

Slipping in, he lit his wand and made his way through the darkened library. Passing by the front desk, he headed toward the reference section, where all the records were held. Starting at the front, he went through the aisle.

“...Arrests...Births...Census...Goblin Relations...Ministry...”

He took the blue book off the shelf and opened it, looking through the Index.

“Department of Magical Tracking...”

Finding the page, he quickly flipped to it, reading it.

“...The Department of Magical Tracking was, along with the Improper Use of Magic Office, integrated into the Department of Magical Law Enforcement in 1984 to conserve funds. The entire Department Head is Amelia Bones, elected in 1982, taking the place of Bartemius Crouch Deceased once he was moved to the Department of Magic Cooperation.”

It didn't list the former Department Heads. Perhaps he could look in the older editions?

Placing the book back, he moved toward the far southern corner of the room, the section marked 'ARCHIVES'.

Walking between the looming wooden shelves, he approached the rear of the library. The entire back wall of the library made up the Archives, holding a thousand years of outdated records.

The area here was significantly darker, lacking the windows to allow in moonlight. It was almost pitch black. Reinforcing his 'lumos', he looked for the book.

Each shelf had a label on it, giving the year that the books described. Starting at the far left, he passed a millennium of records, spanning from the year the school was founded till the year before present.

He had to find 1983, the year before the integration. Stopping at the correct shelf, he looked up, finding the Ministry Book of Records at the very top.

Summoning a ladder from nearby, he put his wand between his teeth and grabbed a hold of the rungs, stepping up. Reaching the top, he grabbed the book, placing it on the flat top of the ladder.

Laying it open, he flipped to the correct page, using the index once more.

“...Department of Magical Tracking

This Department, present on the Law Enforcement Corridor on Level Two, is used to keep track of magical signatures and record any infractions based on these actions. It reports to the Improper Use of Magic Office, who carries out the punishment for underage magic recorded by the Department’s monitoring systems.

The Department consists mostly of the aforementioned monitoring systems as well as an archive of magical signatures of every witch and wizard in Magical Britain. It has been headed by Adam Davis since 1968.”

Adam Davis?

He was a Death Eater, and was no doubt planted there by Voldemort early on to muddle all of his servant’s signatures, less they be caught.

But wasn’t there a Slytherin Prefect named Tracey Davis?

Yes, it was indeed possible to get his signature indirectly...

.....

Leaving the library, Harry quickly locked the door behind him, taking off the silencing charm before he left.

Checking the Marauder's Map, he scanned Hogwarts for any patrolling Prefects or Professors.

Ron and Hermione had retired, and were in bed. Professor Sprout was near the Slytherin House entrance, and Snape was in his quarters...with Malfoy?

Intrigued, Harry opened a flap with a more detailed view of the dungeons.

The dots representing 'Draco Malfoy' and 'Severus Snape' were currently overlapping, in the Potions Master's bedroom, moving in sharp quick motions.

Oh...

Slightly revolted, Harry headed down to the entrance of the dungeons.

Blackmail material always showed up in the most unlikely of places.

.....

Harry stood invisible, watching as Malfoy walked up the stairs from the dungeons, his breath shallow and his face flushed. Sweat dotted his forehead and his clothes looked slightly damp.

As he approached Harry's position, Harry took off his invisibility cloak, letting it drop to the floor.

Stepping over the shimmering fabric, he walked up behind Malfoy and viciously slammed him into the wall.

The blonde Slytherin let off a sharp cry and crumpled to the ground. Grabbing his robes, Harry lifted him up, bringing him face to face.

Malfoy's forehead was cut sharply, as was his lip. Blood streamed down his face as he struggled to get free.

His eyes widened as he saw his attacker, and he immediately let out a snarl.

"Potter! I'll have you –"

Harry silenced him with a powerful punch to his stomach. Malfoy doubled over, gasping for air.

Not giving him any rest, Harry grabbed Malfoy's neck tightly and put him back against the wall. The pureblood struggled feebly, face turning blue. His thrashing became less and less insistent as the lack of air dulled his senses.

Giving him a sadistic grin, Harry released his neck and stepped back.

Malfoy fell to the floor, bent over. He was wheezing loudly, and holding his bruised neck.

Kicking him over with his foot, Harry petrified him from the arms down. The boy immediately froze, ceasing his pathetic antics.

Leaving him lying there, Harry waved his wand around him, muttering an incantation. The air shimmered a bit, before returning to normal.

Turning back to his captive, he walked over to Malfoy. His body lay sprawled on the cold stone floor, looking up at the ceiling. His chest still heaved quickly, trying to bring in air. Despite this, however, he still glared at Harry.

Harry simply stared down at the hateful Slytherin, the torches behind him sending Malfoy into his shadow. A full minute passed before Harry broke the silence.

"So tell me Draco...Are you a fag?"

"A what?" Malfoy spluttered, reddening.

Harry smiled.

"Oh you know, a fag. A fudgepacker if you if will. Don't worry, the corridor is completely silenced. It's just you and me."

Malfoy's eyes stared at Harry in horror, who only smiled wider. He pressed forward, moving closer to the teen.

"Does Daddy have his wicked way with you at night? Perhaps your Uncle Sevvie then?"

Seeing the boy's guilty expression, he lowered his voice, crouching near Malfoy's body.

"My my...you purebloods are really into incest aren't you?" Harry whispered in fake wonderment.

Getting back up, he gave Malfoy a curt bow and walked away. The boy shook as he tried to move his limbs. His face was crimson in rage and embarrassment.

"I'm not gay!" the boy screeched, livid.

Harry stopped in place. Tilting his head to the side, he spun around, putting on an innocent expression.

"Of course you aren't. But wouldn't it be nice if the world..." Harry pressed his wand to his temple and drew a strand out. "...saw a memory of a Draco Malfoy look alike having fun with the resident Potions Master?"

Malfoy paled, his face chalk white.

Smirking in victory, Harry swept back to him, holding the fake strand of memory inches from his face.

"Irrefutable evidence, wouldn't you say? It would be so very *damaging* to your family...I'd say you wouldn't want this *leaked* to the Daily Prophet...am I right?"

Malfoy nodded from his position on the floor, desperation in his eyes.

"Well, in that case, you'll have to do something for me. If you don't, I may just become *clumsy*..." Harry stepped on his groin lightly, causing the Slytherin to scream in pain, "...and *drop* this into Rita Skeeter's hands. Do we have a deal?"

Gritting his teeth against the agony, Malfoy nodded, looking hatefully at his captor.

“Excellent. Now...have you ever heard of *Magicus*?

A/N: This chapter was used mostly for advancing the plot. Don't worry, Harry will be paying Tracey Davis a visit next chapter...

Chapter 3: A Little Persuasion...

“Harry?”

The raven haired wizard turned away from the Announcement Boards and looked at his bushy haired housemate.

“Yes Hermione?” he asked with a hint of irritation in his voice.

“Why are you looking at the Prefect Patrol Schedules? You’re not, well, a Prefect...”

Harry suppressed the urge to curse her. She always had to rub it in...emphasizing the word “Prefect”. It was, after all, the only thing that Hermione had over Harry these days. Her position as top student had been toppled. Well, that and her love life.

But Harry was most determined to change that too.

Plastering a fake smile on his face, he thought up a response.

“Oh, just wondering when you and Ron will be dashing off to a broom closet somewhere...” he said, wagging his eyebrows.

Hermione took the bait and blushed, looking at Ron...who was currently drooling over Lavender Brown. Scowling, she stormed back to the Gryffindor table to berate him.

It was sore topic for Hermione these days. Memory Charm after Memory Charm filled with suggestions had made Ron hopelessly infatuated with Lavender.

Harry didn’t mind at all. As long as Hermione got her fill, he was fine. Ron was too stupid to be mad at for long, and just generally followed Hermione’s orders. Harry figured he was doing to redhead a favor.

It also helped that it had stopped their incessant meddling in his affairs. They spent more time fighting now than caring about where he disappeared to every night.

Glancing back at the schedule, he resumed his search.

“Abbot...Boot...Brocklehurst...Carmichael...Davis...”

Looking across from her name, he quickly memorized her patrol schedule.

“...Friday...2:45 – 4:15 AM...”

Smirking to himself, he walked back to the Gryffindor Table and joined in the meaningless laughter.

.....

“Professor Slughorn?”

The large Potions Professor turned around from the simmering cauldron he had been attending to.

“Harry m’boy!” he boomed, delighted that his famous pupil was speaking with him.

Harry offered him a small smile, drawing up a box of crystallized pineapple from his robes and placing it on his desk. His behavior slightly sickened himself – he was reminded of the memory in which he has seen Tom Riddle perform this very act, making him wonder if he had subconsciously copied the boy.

“And a treat as well! I’m flattered you think enough of me to know my favorite snack!”

Harry bowed his head, keeping the pleasant smile. Opening his hands, he looked up at the former Slytherin Head of House.

“Anything for the best Potions Master Hogwarts has ever known.”

Slughorn seemed especially overjoyed at the declaration. Giving off a rough laugh, he gently chided Harry.

“Now now, Harry, Professor Snape wasn’t *too* bad. But enough of that. What can I help my favorite student with? You’re practically at the top of your class!”

Harry shuffled a bit, thinking back to the used Potions Book he had been using recently. Trying his best to look nervous, he spoke.

“Well, I wanted to know if there are any quick antidotes to counteract love potions...”

Slughorn’s eyebrows rose in surprise. Looking carefully at Harry, he replied.

“Why yes, there is. But why would you need one?”

Harry looked down at the floor, acting bashful.

“Well, Valentines Day is coming around after Christmas break and I thought I’d be prepared...”

The Professor nodded sympathetically.

“Ah yes, of course. Being famous has its drawbacks after all...” Slughorn said, an odd gleam in his eyes. Snapping back to attention, he looked back to Harry. “Say no more m’boy, I’ve got just the solution.”

Moving toward the back rooms, Slughorn headed for the stock of potions he kept on hand.

As soon he was out of sight, Harry sidled smoothly up to the unattended cauldron. Taking a vial out of his robes, he popped the cork and held it over the reddish-brown potion.

“How fast are the effects, sir?” he half-shouted as he poured in a couple drops of liquefied boomslang skin.

The potion reacted quickly, turning a dark green within seconds. It started hissing and smoking heavily.

“The antidote reacts within seconds, although it works faster through physical contact rather than ingestion!” Slughorn’s voice flowed through the doorway. Harry could hear him curse as he tripped over something.

Looking back at the crackling and near explosive solution beside him, he quickly moved to the opposite side of the classroom.

“Professor, I think the potion is going to explode!”

Slughorn rushed out within seconds, looking harried with several new stains on his robes. He gasped as he saw the swirling colors in the cauldron. Reaching quickly for a nearby container, he poured the entire contents, a silvery powder, into the potion.

The smoking died out instantly, and the color started shifting back to its normal color.

Letting out a sigh of relief, he looked over to Harry.

“Close one that was. Must have been contamination again...”

Giving the cauldron a couple stirs, he continued.

“I need to stay with this for a couple more minutes, Harry. Do you think you can fetch the antidote yourself? It’s called *Capistrum*, and is on the back shelf.”

“I think so, Professor...”

The large man beamed at Harry.

“Good boy. Now just make sure you stay away from the spills on the floor...”

“I will,” Harry said, and he walked through the door.

The room was small, several paces wide and only a couple long. Large shelves lined every wall, each holding hundreds and hundreds of potions. The air was extremely foul, and the ground was a mess, littered with broken vials and bubbling liquids Harry made sure to avoid.

Edging around it, Harry looked at all the labels, trying to find the one he needed.

Spotting it a mere seconds later, he took the innocent looking vial and replaced it with the one he had used earlier.

“How goes the potion hunting? Do you need help? It can get pretty messy in there...” He heard Slughorn’s voice from the classroom. Footsteps approached the storeroom.

Moving to the left, he quickly grabbed the *Capistrum* and walked out, holding it up.

“Is this it, sir?” he asked with an unsure expression.

Slughorn stopped mid-stride and peered closely at the vial.

“Yes, that’s it...Good work!” He said proudly, clasping his hand on Harry’s shoulder. “Now, remember that only a small amount, no more than a couple drops, is needed to cancel the effects of whatever mild love potion the lovely ladies have slipped you. Stronger ones require the entire contents.”

Harry nodded at the explanation, smiling gratefully. He knew this.

“Thank you for your help Professor! I’d best be going...need to get to dinner...”

His Professor reached for one of the sweets he had brought, popping one into his mouth.

“Of course, of course...it’s getting late after all...Now, off with you before the students begin eating. Bad form to be late, you know...”

Harry gave him a quick bob of his head and headed for the door. As he went to open it, however, he heard Slughorn speak up once more.

“You’ll go somewhere for sure boy...and when you do, don’t forget about old Slughorn, ok?”

Grabbing the handle, he stopped.

“Don’t worry, Professor...I won’t,” he said, grinning slightly, and walked out.

.....

Harry walked back up from the dungeons, passing by a sneering Severus Snape who was returning to his quarters.

Giving the recently uncovered pedophile a polite smile, he went on, undeterred.

Making sure the newly made Defense Against the Dark Arts Professor was out of sight, he reached into his robes and raised the vial he had gone through all the trouble to obtain.

Passing by the same spot he had met Malfoy mere days before, he watched as the torch above him cast a light on the prim label identifying the harmless looking mixture.

Amortentia...

The strongest love potion in existence, it was a rarity in the magical world. Identified only by its Mother of Pearl sheen, Amortentia could disappear into any substance.

Plucking a strand from his unruly hair, he dropped it into the vial, watching it disappear in a small burst of bubbles. Replacing the cork, he placed it back into his pocket.

Bringing up his watch, he checked the time.

7:24.

That left...seven hours and fifty-one minutes until Tracey Davis would start from her route near the Great Hall to the fourth floor.

He could wait.

He'd been waiting for most of his life.

.....

Arriving in at the Great Hall, he took his seat next to Ron, away from Hermione.

The two were bickering relentlessly, completely ignoring him. Lavender was sitting at the end of the table, gazing at Ron in curiosity.

Lips twitching, he grabbed a drumstick from the platter nearby. Filling his plate, he set to work eating.

A foot sliding up his legs caught his attention.

Looking at him from across the table was Ginny Weasley, smiling seductively. She raised her shoulders innocently before retreating, starting a conversation with Neville Longbottom.

As he watched her, he felt an odd sensation in his chest, a certain jealousy that he knew felt wrong.

It felt like a...*monster*...clawing out.

Looking suspiciously at his Pumpkin Juice, he brought the goblet under the table and poured in a couple drops of the Capistrum antidote.

Putting the vial away, he brought the goblet to his lips once more, drinking deeply. The sensation faded away almost instantaneously, confirming his suspicions.

Ginny was watching him from the corner of her eyes, momentarily quieting as Neville babbled on. She had a hopeful, almost manic look in her eyes, with a smirk of victory that made Harry want to kill her right then and there.

Finishing it all, Harry raised the goblet to her, deciding to play the game with her for now.

Ginny flushed happily and turned back to the chubby boy next to her, completely unaware of her predicament. As far as she knew, the boy-who-lived was hers. Harry wasn't about to inform her otherwise, either.

She would pay later.

Turning his attention away from the obsessed girl, he looked up at the Headmaster, wondering about how much the old man knew of his actions of late. It had been weeks since their last lesson, each getting more and more tense as they went through Tom Riddle's life.

Dumbledore seemed to be staring right at him, his eyes devoid of the usual twinkles.

Before he could try to discern the meaning of it, Ron's agitated voice broke him from his thoughts.

"Do you think I'm being unfaithful Harry?"

Harry looked to Ron, who was watching him expectantly. Hermione had childishly turned her nose, looking elsewhere.

He shrugged.

"Of course not. Why would you be? It's not like you're not allowed to look at other people..."

Ron nodded fervently, agreeing with him. Giving a triumphant look at Hermione's back, he returned to eating, devouring his food enthusiastically.

Seeing his opening, he nudged the Gryffindor's side, pointing to Lavender.

"Lavender's looking well these days...is she free?" Harry whispered inquiringly.

Ron's ears turned pink as he followed his hand, watching the blonde with undisguised admiration.

Slapping Ron on the back, he wiped his mouth and left, smiling wide as he heard Hermione and Ron get into another row.

.....

"*Slytherins Suck*," he enunciated distastefully at the Fat Lady, who gave him a quick nod and swung open to let him through. Not that it

wasn't true, of course. At least one Slytherin would be doing exactly that by the next morning.

He walked into the common room, where Tonks was sitting morosely staring at the fire. The metamorphmagus was startled by his presence, looking away.

Shaking his head, he went to the sixth year dormitories, retrieving his invisibility cloak and map.

Placing the cloak on, he put the Marauder's Map in his pocket and left Gryffindor Tower, mindful of getting out of the way of the students that were returning from dinner.

Slipping out through the portrait as it closed, he disappeared into the now dark and empty hallways of Hogwarts Castle.

It was time to get into position.

.....

Hogwarts was an entirely different place at night.

Tracey Davis shivered as she drew her cloak around herself tightly, making sure to keep in the light.

Gone was the lively castle that held hundreds of students, the warm atmosphere, and the carefree life of a teenage wizard. The safe blanket that kept you assured was gone, leaving a bare, cold stone fortress behind.

The air was cold, the fickle lights from the meager fires playing on every corner, creating a shadow to rival one's greatest fears. But the worst was the silence. She felt herself drowning in the absence of noise, broken only by her frequent footsteps and shallow breathing.

It was unnatural, and she hated it.

Looking over her shoulder, she sped up her pace.

She often wondered why she ever took the responsibility of being a prefect, enforcing the *rules*, patrolling at ungodly hours.

Then her father's face came to mind.

Adam Davis was a cunning man, who appreciated knowledge and prestige. He valued information above all else, citing it the greatest power in the land.

Prestige came from reputation, and reputations were built.

Prefects were model students, and grew up to be model citizens, like her father.

Or rather, his image.

A Death Eater, he was a spy in the Department of Magical Tracking, keeping the signatures of Lord Voldemort's men disguised and muddled. Aurors could never link the death and destruction that the Death Eaters weaved to the upstanding Purebloods of society.

So it was with no surprise that the Davis patriarch insisted she keep playing the game, to be a prefect and create a respectful identity. It also helped dispel any image of evil that came with their surname.

Turning the corner, she thought she heard a soft whisper behind her ear, a hot breath playing on delicate skin. Spinning around, Tracey looked around frantically, her heart hammering in her chest.

The empty corridor stared back at her, bathed in complete darkness.

No one.

Slowly turning back, she met a pair of gleaming emerald eyes before they suddenly descended upon her.

Warm lips covered her own, a searing tongue invading her mouth.

She fought against the attacker, but two arms held her tight, flush against the unknown student. Her twisting and turning were futile, and the kiss was unrelenting.

But then...she felt as if a large weight was pressed on her chest, making it difficult to breathe.

She let out a slow breath, her extremities going numb for a moment before a pleasant tingle began on her lips, spreading to her tongue, down her body, deep inside.

Her thoughts became sluggish, as if she was slowly being pushed aside...she felt as if she was observing the world through a dirty glass. Time seemed to slow down as the captivating kiss ended, her arms latching around this...focus...

It was like being wiped clean, her worries disappearing completely and being replaced with a single objective. She let out a soft sigh and closed her eyes...basking in the success...the success of being there for Harry Potter.

.....

Harry looked down at the brunette in his arms, her head nestled in his neck like Jamie before her.

With a flash of disgust, he pushed her away savagely, glaring at the pureblood.

Tracey let out a surprised yelp before she crashed to the cold stone floor, sprawled ungracefully at his feet.

Wiping his lips on his sleeve, he made sure to rid them of any trace of the Amortentia.

Attempting to get back to a more dignified position, Tracey immediately looked up at him with boundless worship, crawling back up to him pathetically and pressing herself against his legs, reaching for his trousers.

The sight was enough to make him laugh.

It was amusing, really, that he had reduced this prideful pureblooded bitch to a common whore...kneeling at the feet of the dirty half-blood

Harry Potter and giving him a blow job. How her parents would be shamed.

She wasn't even that good.

Inexperienced, she was more of a disappointment than anything else.

Grabbing her roughly, he picked her up and pressed her against the wall, pinning her in place with his body.

She didn't seem to mind, evident by the look of euphoria on her features.

"Hello Tracey...how are you today?" He asked sweetly, bringing his face close to her own.

The Slytherin shivered in anticipation, breathing in deeply.

"I-I'm well..." was all she managed to say, her senses clouded in desire and pleasure.

Amortentia was unlike any other love potion in existence. It didn't so much as induce love, or create an attraction where it did not exist before.

Rather, it made the lack of a target's presence and acceptance unbearable on the victim. Being near, pleasing, or having intimate contact with the target was rewarded with feelings of accomplishment, euphoria, and success.

Even the most strong willed cracked under it, influenced deeply. No, it didn't create love for the target, but rather, a love for the feelings that being with the target provided.

So it was with this in mind that Harry stepped away, leaving her alone.

It also helped that she had been given a more concentrated dose, making for great rewards as well as 'punishments'.

Tracey's breathing intensified, and she tried to move forward to get back to him, horror etched on her fine features.

“Incarcerous!” Harry snarled, as thick chains wrapped themselves around the prefect’s legs.

She stumbled half-way and fell to the floor. It didn’t seem to stop her, however, as she still tried to crawl back to him, a look of hopeless devotion in her eyes.

He stepped back as she came forward, but she didn’t seem to tire, determined to be near him.

Thinking quickly, he cast a sticking charm at her, anchoring her to the floor. This did not stop her from continuing to try.

But then, a wicked smile sprung onto his face as he stepped backwards once more.

.....

Tears of frustration came down her cheeks, and she was shaking from withdrawal. His retreat was wreaking havoc on her, making her feel alone, unwanted, and in emotional agony.

Another step.

Her breathing became labored, and she felt her limbs freezing up...

Another.

She let out a sob of anguish, her shaking intensifying...

One more.

Anxiety clawed at her brain as she started going into shock...

And suddenly he was there again, holding her, burying her in his chest, whispering soothing words in her ears. She felt herself going boneless, her head swimming in blind oblivion.

Warmth crept back into her chest and her body settled, a mere trembling remaining. Air flowed freely into her lungs as she tried to capture the scent of the source of comfort that held her so.

And then she was dropped.

Again.

It was like cold water being splashed into her face.

Once more she felt her muscles go weak, her blood freezing and an alarming panic gripping her senses.

Tremors crept down her spine, echoing each backwards step, out of her life and out of her sight. The shadows took his malicious smile, obscuring his features, and he started disappearing from view...

Terror flashed through her as her body seemed to give up, despair filling her at the thought of being *alone*...without *him*.

She felt like dead weight, and the world seemed to close around her as she gasped through the constricting sensation in her throat.

.....

Harry watched from the shadows in morbid interest as a massive panic attack took her, stemming from both withdrawal from his presence and the sheer fear of the amplified 'punishment' the concentrated Amortentia provided.

He could practically feel her heart beating, the melodious rhythm pounding frantically.

Almost absentmindedly, he rocked his head to the imaginary sound.

She wouldn't survive much more of this, her nervous system overloaded as it was. He gave her a scant three minutes at best before she died of over stimulation and heart failure.

But no, he wouldn't interfere until...

"Stop it," a fearful voice called from behind.

Now.

.....

Tonks stood behind Harry, her wand at his back.

She watched as he stopped the periodic sway of his head, causing her to grip her shaking wand tighter.

He stood still for a moment, a hidden smile on his face.

Tilting his head, he swept around, black robes swirling around him.

Bright green eyes surveyed her.

“Tonks.”

It was neither a question nor a statement.

It was a welcoming sort of sound.

She couldn't fall for it, not again.

“H-Harry, y-you can't d-do this anymore. I'm here to s-stop this...” she stuttered, trying her best to look authoritative.

He gave a bright grin, one that looked horribly out of place in the situation.

“Oh really?” he purred, gliding toward her gracefully. “But that's what you said the time before, and the one before that, and *all* the times you have tried to ‘*stop me*’.”

She stepped backwards, her nerveless hand holding the *stick* separating her from *him*.

A cry from Tracey broke the silence.

“Just stop it! Stop it now!” she screeched, looking fearfully at the dark figure before her and the thrashing figure on the floor nearby.

How could this *stick* protect her?

“Stop me?” he asked coyly, before he slid up to her, the dark material flowing around him.

He put his hand on her wand, bringing his face close.

“How come I never feel particularly threatened then?” he whispered in her ear, feeling her shiver as he did so.

The twelve inches of Cherry wood fell from her grasp, and she backed herself away, meeting a wall.

Retreating, he looked at her critically. “You know, I don’t think you want to stop me at all. In fact, you want this, don’t you?”

She stayed silent, the question gnawing at her mind.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” She said desperately, her voice nearly drowned out by the sound of the thrashing girl.

“Oh, stop. Remus isn’t giving you any?”

Her blue eyes darkened in anger, stepping back forward.

“Keep Remus out of this!” she snarled.

Harry only smiled in a knowing way.

Turning around, he sent off a stunner at the girl, the sharp red blast of light hitting her back.

She collapsed into a blissful darkness.

Blowing on his wand dramatically, he put it away and paced back to her, gathering her face in his hands.

“Oh come. You’ve been pining after the man since last year. You’ve been depressed lately, and your patronus even looks like a wolf.”

She dropped her head in shame, Harry’s arms circling around her like he always did.

“There is no point...” he murmured almost mournfully into her hair, stroking her softly.

A hand dipped under her robes, cupping her tightly.

“...he probably doesn’t even care.”

Hurt flashed across her face, realizing he was right.

“How many words have you even had with him in your entire life?”

Another hand found her breasts, fondling them almost carelessly.

“Five? Ten? Pass the butter?”

His lips met hers, the winding *hiss* flowed through her.

She felt his wants, the entrancing web of lust and desire washing over her.

Tonks let go, her metamorphmagus nature shifting her body to meet his needs, like they often did with him.

“At least he doesn’t ask me to change for him...” she whispered hoarsely in self-defense, not believing it herself.

Breaking the kiss, Harry met her now emerald eyes, brushing aside long black hair.

“You know,” he mused, ignoring her, “Maybe, just maybe Remus *would* have you...”

Seeing her eyes light up, he took great pleasure in crushing her hope.

“And ask you to morph into Sirius so he can take you from behind...”
At Tonks’ horrified look, he added nastily, “Oh yes, you didn’t know? I am in possession of a lot of dirty secrets, Nymphadora, including ours. Don’t make me reveal them.”

A nod was all it took.

.....

Tracey Davis woke up in her private bedroom, a perk of Slytherin House.

As soon as her eyes opened, she felt the familiar sense of cold and loss that had ravaged her during the night. It wasn't as bad, neither was it crippling.

Getting up, she wobbled a bit, trying to stand straight, bleary eyes shut to keep out the light that entered through the fake window.

Clearing the images of the nightmare from her mind, she ambled to her closet.

As she put on her robes, Tracey decided to go to the hospital wing before she went to class.

She had to have gotten sick.

Looking for her wand, she found it moments later on her nightstand.

The squat, wooden structure sat next to her bed, completely empty besides a small old clock, her wand, and a plain, white card.

Putting her wand in her bag, she rubbed her eyes and stared at the innocent looking piece of paper with interest, her breath still shallow and slightly labored.

Curiosity overtook her and she reached for it, grasping it in her clammy hands and opening it up.

'IT WASN'T A DREAM'...

.....

Harry Potter walked to breakfast as he always did, neatly dressed and his hair mussed up.

Thinking back to the previous night, he let a genuine smile grace his lips.

After Tonks had delivered an invisible Tracey back to her room while in her form, Harry had taken the time to write a nice note to the Slytherin, ensuring she did not repress the memory or forget her purpose.

The detailed instructions under the proclamation were made clear.

Withdrawing a half-empty vial of Capistrum from his pocket, he tossed it in the air, catching it lightly.

And with the weakened form of the Amortentia in her system, she would have the motivation to carry it out.

A/N: I'll be traveling overseas starting June 13th 2006, so updates will be *a lot* slower, if at all. I return on the 25th of August, so all my stories will be on a semi-hiatus until then.

Review!

Amerision

Chapter 4: Desperation is the Road to Darkness

.....

The holidays had gone by quietly, uneventfully, and Harry had found himself anxious, awaiting the return of the students.

Not for companionship of course, Harry had Tonks to keep him company and a virtually empty Hogwarts Castle as his playground.

But today had been the day the students had returned, two of them with certain things he had *requested*. Malfoy was by far the more important of the two, and therefore the first he had opted for a rendezvous with.

.....

“Stupefy!”

Draco Malfoy fell to the faintly lit ground, his wand rolling away in the darkness.

Harry stepped out of the shadows, watching the courier sink into unconsciousness under the weakly burning torch. Rolling the boy over with a careless wave of his wand, Harry knelt over him and scavenged through the pureblood’s cloak. Finding a shrunken book, he put it in his own pocket after glancing in satisfaction at the title.

Malfoy had followed his directions it seemed, but Harry was left at a loss as to what he was to do with the Slytherin. Away from Snape, Malfoy would have been able to keep his threat secret.

Christmas break was over, however, and the students had all returned to the castle. He had slipped Malfoy a note to meet him at the earliest possible opportunity – after dinner the night they had arrived. Observant eyes would be tired with sleep, minds dulled beyond suspicion. It was also important that Harry retrieve the package and subdue Malfoy before he met with Snape for their...activities.

He didn't put it past the man to routinely scavenge through Malfoy's head.

Levitating the limp body, Harry placed his invisibility cloak over it and guided it toward one of the many unused classrooms deep in the heart of Hogwarts. Sticking him to the wall, he locked door behind him and silenced the area.

He wouldn't be found for days at the very least. That would give him some time to devise a solution.

.....

Harry found privacy in the boy's dormitory room after classes the next day – with the other Sixth Years taking the apparition test, there was no one to disrupt his studies.

An owl knocking on his window interrupted Harry's reading.

Looking up from *Magicus*, Harry swept back the curtain surround the four poster bed and let the shivering barn owl in. It was drenched, having flown in the freezing rain. A small letter (still dry – Hagrid had used his umbrella again it seemed) was clutched in its talons.

Dear Harry, Ron, and Hermione,

Aragog died last night. Harry and Ron, you met him, and you know how special he was. Hermione, I know you'd have liked him. It would mean a lot to me if you'd nip down for the burial later this evening. I'm planning on doing it after midnight – that was his favorite time of day. I know you're not supposed to be out that late, but you can use the cloak. Wouldn't ask, but I can't face this alone.

Hagrid

Reading through the tearstained parchment quickly, Harry folded it up and put it away in his pocket. Sitting still for a moment, Harry debated visiting Hagrid at all. The anticipation – he looked at the book – of crossing the barrier was incredible, but something small inside him made him look through the slightly fogged window at the small hut in the distance.

He could dimly make out a large, still figure in the window. Feeling a twang of sympathy (or was it pity?), he closed the book. Almost resentfully, he shrunk the old periodical and placed it back into his trunk, making sure to lock it with several powerful charms.

It wasn't a waste of time really; visiting Hagrid would only strengthen their friendship. Allies were allies, and despite how useless Hagrid was in the workings of Hogwarts, he was still a large, nine foot half giant.

Somewhere, in the back of his mind, a small voice reminded him that Hagrid was also his first true friend, and that visiting him for his loss was the right thing to do.

It went ignored.

.....

It was still late afternoon, much too early to see Hagrid, leaving Harry time to meet with the Tracey. In his excitement with receiving *Magicus*, he had mostly forgotten his attempt to disassociate himself from the unforgivable and Dark Arts wards. It was an enticing notion, a winding, sweet thought that he resolved to follow up on.

He had, initially, planned to bypass it merely for the use of the Imperius curse to make his activities more clandestine. The idea, however, grew in his mind. Still, his approach remained the same. Smoothing himself unnecessarily, he set out to the secluded area he had chosen for her.

.....

Harry's second target stood waiting not far from where he had found Malfoy.

Tracey Davis stood in the middle of a hallway, looking slightly nervous. A small transparent glass cube was held in her hand, a soft, pulsating green escaping between her fingers.

She had spent hours in front of the mirror before the meeting, the alien sensation in her mind prodding her to look her best, to please

Harry Potter. A slightly childish smile took her face when she saw his figure approach her.

Harry grinned back at her, making her flush prettily under his gaze. She felt a burst of white euphoria in her stomach as his happiness triggered the latent Amortentia in her system.

She leaned toward him slightly as he came closer, eyes half-way closed as his warm breath brushed her face.

Harry allowed her the pleasure of his presence, watching amused as her shoulders fell slightly as she pressed herself against his chest. That action belonged to *someone*...someone else, but Harry suppressed the urge to raise his wand against her.

Holding her hand, he took the small cube out of her unresisting fingers. Davis's eyes were closed now, her breath slightly shallow and slow as her mind went pleasantly numb.

It was his signature - the key he needed to disassociate himself from the powerful Dark Arts alarm ward that blanketed Hogwarts. It was probably only a copy – he wouldn't be surprised if the elder Davis had made a copy of the unaltered signatures for Voldemort, giving him a vast advantage in locating potential victims.

Resting his chin on Tracey's head and grinning into her hair, he held the cube behind her shoulder, gazing into the pulsing green depths within. The cube was deceptively powerful. It was more than just an aspect of his identity.

With it, he could finally progress into the deeper aspects of magic, the unforgivables and the other true Dark Arts. Looking through some of the books he had located in the other rooms of the antechamber, he had located what appeared to be curses and charms beyond the grade of what he had initially thought were the Dark Arts. It was an entire branch of magic unto its own, far more complex and powerful than the basic, worthless hexes he had located in the old Hogwarts texts. The mere opening of the books had drawn him in, the lines of texts, the winding scripts of spells burned into his mind at the glimpse of their mere words.

The thought had frightened him, of course, to use what Voldemort had used, to wield the mysterious power that Dumbledore warned him against. It wasn't so much as surviving against Voldemort – the very thought seemed absurd even – but just becoming more *powerful*...to cross the boundaries of worlds and find the object of his dreams, his waking fantasies and hateful rage.

It wasn't love...it was obsession in the most fundamental sense. And obsession could drive a man to the ends of the earth – or beyond.

A shy hand making its way into his robes drew him out of his reverie. Deeming her function complete, Harry pressed his wand against her neck and stunned her, letting her crumble to the floor.

Harry contemplated this new loose end – he considered placing her with Malfoy, but dismissed the thought as quickly as it had come. Too much possibility of escape.

Sending her back was not an option either. Her abnormal demeanor a few days before break had not drew too much suspicion, but her continued behavior after two weeks would arouse suspicion. His presence would be too near for the drugged girl to ignore easily.

Locking her up somewhere else would add to the diversion he had hoped to create with Malfoy, masking his activities further. Placing her in another obscure room, added the same charms he did with Malfoy's.

Satisfied, Harry made his way to dinner. Appearances had to be kept.

.....

Harry arrived in the Great Hall, only a few moments late. He noted Professor Slughorn frown at him in mock disappointment before turning back to Snape and resume a heated debate.

It was disturbing the amount of interest Slughorn had taken in him recently, as if seeking to emulate his relationship with Tom Riddle. Harry had seen far too many parallels between them, an idea that bothered him far less than he would have liked. It brought a faint

sense of pride to be of the same caliber as the powerful former Head Boy.

Finding his usual spot, Harry sat next to Ron. The boy had adamantly refused to go to Aragog's funeral, citing the breach of security such an act would present. The redhead kept his distance for awhile before predictably warming up after some light banter.

Hermione arrived late, something rare for the pestering, bushy haired girl. She looked flustered, next to tears. Sitting across from them, she dropped herself into her seat, eyes slightly red. Harry barely hid his smile.

Ron, Harry dimly noted, was immediately by her side, moving next to her and asking her questions.

"Hey Harry!"

Harry looked to his left, watching as Ginny took Ron's spot, sitting too close for comfort. The youngest Weasley gave him dazzling smile. Harry, unimpressed, nodded and went back to sustenance.

Undeterred, Ginny began chatting away, moving topic to topic. Ignoring her for more pressing matters, he looked toward the Slytherin table, where he immediately noticed the tense, questioning air the Slytherins had. They had noticed their housemates' absences quickly, and were understandably worried for their own individual safety.

Interruption came in the laughter from across the table. Hermione was smiling, Ron looking as if he had won all the galleons in the world. Harry barely managed to hold back a sneer. Seeing his odd expression, Hermione grabbed Ron's hand on the table, giving Harry a patronizing look.

"You really ought to try it sometime, Harry. You know, settling down with a nice girl. It might do you some good."

Ginny looked especially snide at this announcement, thinking her plan already in motion. Harry looked up, seeing Tonks glance over

from across the table in slight annoyance. A smile tugged at his lips, and he put down his fork.

Hermione saw the metamorphmagus's gaze and looked back at Harry, understanding blossoming in her narrowing eyes. Hermione *had* of course, seen of their activities at some point, but Harry's wand had made quick work of her. Still, it was likely that some faint images and ideas of the memory had remained.

He knew she wouldn't say anything of the matter to Dumbledore until she had concrete proof, but she was bound to be more suspicious. Harry's wand twitched in his hand.

"I've heard Malfoy and some other Slytherin have disappeared..." Ron interjected weakly, trying to dispel the silence. Then, putting on a grin, he added "Maybe there's some Gryffindor monster prowling Hogwarts killing off the Slytherins."

The others found this one immensely funny, whilst Harry merely grinned.

.....

Harry's wand glowed a slight indigo as the link to Hogwart's wards broke, the easily cast charm finishing its effect. A powerful feeling of boundless potential flew through him at the moment, and he felt his limbs tense up. Suppressing the urge to exercise his new freedom, Harry withdrew his arms from around a warm, sleeping (and morphed) Tonks and looked at the wall. A clock appeared there at his gaze.

11:51 PM

Putting on his clothes and wrapping the invisibility cloak around himself, he left the Auror in the Room of Requirement. Silencing his steps, he descended the seven floors to the darkened great hall. Passing the entrance hall, he unlocked the front doors and slipped through. There was minimal security in the actual castle itself – Dumbledore apparently relied heavily upon the wards to keep out any invaders.

Making his way quickly across the sprawling, wet greens, he saw two shadows in the corner of his eyes. Overtaken by a sudden curiosity, he moved behind them and followed their trek back toward the castle.

To his relief, it was only Professors Sprout and Slughorn.

"I do thank you for taking the time, Pomona," Slughorn was saying courteously, "Most authorities agree that they are at their most efficacious if picked at midnight."

"Oh I quite agree," said Professor Sprout warmly. "That enough for you?"

"Plenty, plenty," said Slughorn, who, Harry saw, was carrying an armful of leafy plants. This should allow for a few leafs for each of my third years, and some to spare if anyone over-stews them. Merlin knows we don't want to give Snape another reason to come over and complain about my ineptitude."

"Which reminds me," said Sprout, sounding slightly annoyed. "What was Snape on about last night? He looked to be criticizing your Potion's ability *again*! Severus usually is rude, but he rarely ever crosses the line like that!"

Slughorn looked to deflate slightly. "Well, Snape went through the potions stores to '...check a suspicion of his.' He had been worried that one of his students had been put under some love potion. Apparently he found them confirmed when he saw the Amortentia the ministry had cleared for us gone. He's been snide about it since, and has pushing for me to report it Dumbledore. He claims the Potter boy's behind all this."

Sprout laughed. "That's why he won't report it himself. He knows no one would believe him if he blamed poor Harry. Everyone blames the young man for everything. Such a nice boy he is though."

Slughorn agreed, but looked slightly unconvinced at Harry's plight. Harry knew the man was considering him as a potential suspect well enough – he was the only one with the ability to have stolen it at all, having been left alone in the potion's storeroom at one point.

Snape's role in the affair surprised him as well. It seemed he knew of Tracey's odd behavior and had confronted her about it. With Slughorn discovering the missing Amortentia quicker than Harry had anticipated, the fragile house of cards he had built was rapidly falling apart around him.

He knew he wasn't in immediate danger – Slughorn was not the type that would admit his negligence easily. Neither would Snape (or the other Professors once it became clear that the two students were really missing) find Malfoy and Davis soon. They were, however, risks that Harry couldn't take for too long.

The gravity of the situation hit Harry suddenly, and he realized that *something* had to be done if he was to stay safe. Slughorn seemed to be his worst enemy at this point. Dumbledore would believe his suspicions fairly quickly.

"...Well, good evening to you, and many thanks again!" Slughorn said to Professor Sprout as she waved and turned toward her greenhouses and disappeared in the darkness. Turning back to Hogwarts, he resumed his walk toward the castle, his large body waddling slightly with the effort.

Placing himself ahead of the man, Harry threw off his invisibility cloak and bid the man good evening.

"Merlin's beard, Harry, you made me jump!" jumped Slughorn, looking around him warily. "How did you get out of the castle?" he asked with sudden suspicion.

"I think Filch must've forgotten to lock the doors," said Harry casually, and was slightly disappointed when he saw Slughorn's bushy eyebrows rise in disbelief.

"But why are *you* out here, Harry?" he pressed, none too gently.

Slumping his shoulders for the effect, he hung his head slightly. "Well, sir, it's Hagrid," replied Harry quietly. "He's pretty upset...But you won't tell anyone, Professor? I don't want trouble for him..."

Slughorn's curiosity got the better of him, his interest clearly aroused. "What do you mean? I can't promise not to tell anyone, but I know Dumbledore trusts Hagrid to the hilt, so he can't be up to anything very dreadful..."

"Well, it's this giant spider, he's had it for years...it lived in the forest...it could talk and everything –"

"I've heard rumors there were acromantula in the forest," said Slughorn softly in wonder, looking over the mass of black trees. "It's true, then?"

"Yes," said Harry. "But this one, Aragog, the first one Hagrid ever got, it died last night. He's devastated. He wants some company while he buries it and I said I'd go."

"Touching, touching," said Slughorn absentmindedly, his large droopy eyes fixed upon the distant lights of Hagrid's cabin. Harry knew he had the man. He knew Slughorn was the greedy type, and it was a well known fact how much acromantula venom was worth.

The professor went on, his eyes slightly glazed over at the thought, talking more to himself than Harry. "But acromantula venom is very valuable...If the beast only just died it might not yet have dried out...Of course, I wouldn't want to do anything insensitive if Hagrid is upset...but if there were any way to procure some...I mean, it's almost impossible to get venom from an acromantula while it's alive...and it seems just a terrible waste..."

"Well," interjected Harry delicately, in his most convincing delicacy, "...if you *want* to come, Professor, Hagrid would probably be really pleased...give Aragog a better send-off, you know..."

"Of course, of course," Slughorn said quickly, all thoughts of Harry's transgressions forgotten. "I'll tell you what, Harry, I'll meet you down there with a bottle or two...We'll drink to the poor beast's – well – not health – but we'll send it off in style, anyway, once it's buried. And I'll change my tie, this one is a little exuberant for the occasion."

Harry merely smiled and sped off to Hagrid's.

.....

It had taken a couple of bottles of fine liquor, but Harry had eventually whittled down Slughorn. He knew his plan wouldn't work otherwise – Dumbledore had told him that Slughorn was an exceptionally accomplished wizard. He would need some assistance if he was to succeed.

"I am not proud..." Slughorn whispered through his fingers. "I am ashamed of what – what that memory shows...I think I may have done a great damage that day."

"You'd cancel out anything you did by giving me the memory..." Harry said soothingly, "It would be a very brave and noble thing to do."

Hagrid twitched in his sleep and snored on. Slughorn's unfocussed eyes swam with slight tears. Harry couldn't care less – as far as he was concerned, it was partially Slughorn's fault Voldemort ever became immortal, ever killed his family. He deserved what he was going to get.

Finding the opportunity to please Dumbledore as well as accomplish his own goals, Harry sat patiently as Slughorn put his hand in his pocket and pulled out his wand.

Placing it against his temple, the older man pulled out a long strand of memory with his shaking hand, dropping it into a small vial Harry had provided.

The memory swirled like gas as Harry took it from him, placing it in his own pocket. Drawing his wand slowly from his sleeve, Harry hung his head for a few moments, staring at polished holly and ignoring Slughorn's feeble attempts at begging for forgiveness. It was time.

Harry looked up to the drowsy, teary eyed Professor with a darkish glint in his eyes.

"Thank you very much, Professor. *Imperio!*"

.....

“...Acromantula are thought to possess an elaborate class structure, with the oldest member of the tribe as elder...

...Acromantulian society places a large emphasis on honor...transgressions involving violations of honor typically result in dismemberment for the perpetrator. Millennia of this behavior have defined the class structure to an almost fanatical degree.

...death is an especially important aspect to Acromantulian society. Usually, the bodies of elders are eaten, apparently in an attempt to conserve wisdom and strength and pass it on to the next generation. Interference of this ritual has proven to be extremely dangerous to observers...

...one must take care to be especially vigilant during the dismemberment of an acromantula for its valuable commodities...acromantula will attack and kill any wizard it finds has taken part of the violation of its race.

-Creatures of the Dark: Acromantula

.....

Harry's next invitation to meet with Dumbledore was delayed due to recent, unfortunate events.

“Very good work retrieving the memory from the late Professor Slughorn. Had his unfortunate death occurred any sooner, we would have been left without direction in finding Tom's weakness.”

Harry nodded absentmindedly.

“Is there anything you'd like to tell me before we start?”

Harry's attention returned to the old wizard sitting across from him. The ancient mage sat unmoving at his desk, his fathomless blue eyes examining him. Harry knew Dumbledore would not violate his privacy now that he knew of Occulumenty, but his mind went blank regardless. It was perhaps the only useful knowledge he had received from Snape.

Pursing his lips, he managed a thoughtful expression. "Nothing terribly important comes to mind..." It was incredibly difficult to lie to Albus Dumbledore. As Harry's skills in magic had improved, he began to feel a powerful presence around the headmaster, a sunken, silent white noise beneath the surface of perception. Harry suspected that it only added to the unease and sense of displacement.

Dumbledore's hands seemed to steeple themselves further before they relaxed, his expression unreadable. Looking into his eyes once more, the old wizard stood from his chair and left for his personal quarters to retrieve a certain memory strand.

Harry let out the breath he had been holding, sensing, rather than seeing Dumbledore was out of sight. Letting out the breath he had been holding, Harry's attention returned to the regal avian in the gold perch to his far right. Brilliant red feathers shined unnaturally in the candlelight, seeming to shimmer with the flame.

A small, black eye stared shrewdly at him, and for a second Harry's blood ran cold, his stomach twisting anxiously. As if in a trance, he approached the bird's perch, sending a careful hand toward the deeply powerful magical creature.

Unmoving, Fawkes let out an unearthly screech that seemed to grind his very bones. The unimaginable sharp sound of despair, death, hopelessness was all consuming. Red was replaced with a worn, dull grey, the room seemingly sucked of color. Harry's ears seemed to bleed, the sound so deafening that he thought the world would wake. In an instant, it went silent. The phoenix's beak remained closed.

A pale Harry Potter gripped the desk, doubled over in sudden pain, trying unsuccessfully to avoid the gaze of the supernatural creature. Harry could feel an alien sense of magic curling about him, making his nails claw at the thick cherry wood, suffocating his presence, seeking to stifle him. The bird's neck spun slowly, facing him with an awful *knowing*.

And suddenly, when he thought he would drown, Dumbledore returned moments later, carrying a slender tube filled with a swirling silvery-white liquid. The room seemed to brighten suddenly, and everything slammed jarringly back into place.

If the headmaster had seen or heard what had happened, he kept silent.

.....

A/N: This chapter was extremely rushed, and I know the style has changed somewhat. The canon scenes were edited slightly to fit the circumstances, so there are a few statement left out or added.

I hope I'm still up to par, as it's been a long time since I've written this. As always, reviews are appreciated.

Amerision

Chapter Five: Perched on Evil's Meadow

“Let not malice and anger consume thee, for it is the path to damnation...thy soul shall twist like the wilted flower perched on evil’s meadow.”

Dobby shrank under his powerful gaze, pulling on his long droopy ears and stepping away fearfully.

“I is not sure! Dobby does not know what Notboy is doing. I is sorry, Harry Potter sir! Please forgive Dobby!” he wailed, grappling at his feet. His massive green eyes were watery, shining in darkened common room.

Harry ignored him, stepping out of Dobby’s reach and looking toward his other elf with unconcealed hate. “What about you, Kreacher? Has your decrepit carcass found anything?”

Kreacher ignored the insults, looking up at him in an uncharacteristic, polite manner. “Kreacher has found that Nott goes to Room of Requirement with young Malfoy’s friends Crabbe and Goyle. They transform into girls and wait for him inside. Kreacher is not able to get in, but he knows that Nott is working for the Dark Lord himself!”

Harry’s eyes narrowed at Kreacher’s oily tone, regarding him with suspicion. Next to them, Dobby was hitting himself against the stone wall. “And how do you know this?”

Kreacher smiled, his crooked teeth terrifying. “Master wants to know?” he asked in a faux respectful tone.

Harry whipped out his wand and leveled it between Kreacher’s eyes. “Yes Kreacher. I’d like to know,” he barked.

The old, gnarled elf bowed again. “Kreacher saw young Nott’s arm when boy is changing...yes, Kreacher saw it well. Nott’s arm holds the *snake!*”

An indignant sound alerted Harry to another presence. Harry turned around to see a shocked and fairly angry Hermione bound down the stairs from the girl's dormitory, clad only in her nightgown.

"What is this? What are you doing?" she screeched, slapping down Harry's wand and pulling a slightly bloodied Dobby away from the wall. The dazed elf fell to the floor, moaning loudly while cradling his head.

"None of your business," growled Harry quietly, pocketing his wand.

Hermione looked up from the floor, face rapidly reddened while helping Dobby up. "You let Dobby hurt himself because he disappointed you and it's *none of my business*?" she exploded. "I come downstairs and see you threatening Kreacher!"

Disregarding her, he ordered Dobby to leave. The sobbing house elf bowed quickly, disappearing out of Hermione's grasp with a sharp *crack!*

Harry turned back to his own elf. "Kreacher...you may leave. Keep me informed if you learn anything else."

The elf bowed yet again, looking up with a dark smile before popping away.

Hermione walked up to him, shoving her finger into his chest. Her eyes were narrowed, lips thinned. "You're up to something, Harry – I know you are. You've changed, and it's not for the better."

Without a backwards glance, she disappeared back upstairs.

Harry's mind screamed at him to fling out a curse and stop her, to punish, to *control*...to *imperio* her mind and ensure her compliance. Shoving his hands in his pockets, he looked away, feeling the almost painful urge ebb away slowly.

Looking back at the wall, his eyes traced the slight imprint of Dobby's blood, quelling the swell of satisfaction it brought to see Dobby suffer for his failure.

Harry wondered how much Hermione had overheard. He had hastily put up a silencing and notice-me-not charm, but they were relatively easy to break. The girl had obviously been spying on him, and it was only her misplaced compassion for house elves that had exposed her. It was possible she had been following him elsewhere as well.

Anger took him again at the thought of her sticking herself where she didn't belong. Hermione had been nothing but a pain to him over the last year, from her pride at crowing her victories over Harry (pointing out that she had been right to try to stop him from going to save Sirius), to her jealousy at Harry besting her in potions with the Half-Blood Prince's book.

She would no doubt prove a hindrance to his plans should she discover anything substantial.

You could...dispose of her...like you did with Slughorn...

Harry ignored the thought, his nails digging into skin as his wand hand clenched tightly inside his robes.

.....

With Snape as Potions Professor once more, Dumbledore had brought in Kingsley Shacklebolt to take up the Defense against the Dark Arts position.

It was without doubt purposeful, bringing yet another Auror inside the school. Harry had found himself under increased and tightened security.

Tonks, it seemed, was no longer trusted, and Harry suspected Hermione was to blame for letting this concern slip to the Order. The metamorphmagus herself was lost to the world. Harry's conditioning over the past six months had turned the Auror almost completely emotionally dependent on him. It was highly useful having her, but she was increasingly annoying in that she herself beginning to think he actually cared for her.

But the illusion had become increasingly dissatisfying, and he found himself craving more than an identical body...he wanted her mind,

her soul...Jamie's malicious green eyes, her teasing whispered kisses, her warm, writhing body pressed against his own.

Closing his eyes, Harry rubbed his temples, attempting to tear away his mind from the images. He supposed it was the knowledge that he was closer than ever before and achieving his goals that had caused her to dominate his every waking thought.

Passing the Room of Requirement, he looked at the door, wondering what Voldemort was planning. Theodore Nott was a fairly intelligent boy, so it wasn't much of a surprise that he had been picked for the task he had been assigned.

It was odd though, to send a Hogwarts student.

Thinking back to Kreacher, Harry knew the elf could not lie to him – as his master, blatant deceit was simply impossible for the elf. Still, his behavior, particularly his cooperation and lack of defiance, bothered him. Voldemort was planning something important, and if Nott's sudden proud and haughty behavior was any indication, it didn't bode any of them well.

He preferred if he were to leave before anything happened, but he couldn't escape this realm just yet. It would be a relief to cease being a target. His research with the mirror, however, was still slow, *Magicus* being incredibly long and detailed. The other articles were interesting as well, with scores of new experimental spells and curses as well as rituals Roman sorcerers had devised to empower themselves against foreign invaders.

The writing was long winded and unfocussed, the applications of the research never given clearly. Still, Harry had gained much insight as to the inner workings of the mirror.

Descending to the third floor, Harry saw a casually standing Kingsley Shacklebolt speaking with Tonks two floors downwards. Stepping back, he observed the scene from the balcony.

He couldn't hear them, but she seemed to look nervous and highly uncomfortable. Kingsley draped a hand over her shoulder and led her

to the stairway opposite them. They slowly ascended to the second floor, heading toward a certain gargoyle.

Tonks seemed to realize their destination at that moment as well, as she started fighting off the tall, black Auror. Kingsley overpowered and stunned her quickly, using an unknown spell to force her back to her normal form. Levitating her, he spoke a password to the gargoyle and floated her up the newly revealed circular stairwell.

A dim anxiety took his mind as he realized the gravity of the situation. Tonks knew of a significant portion of his activities, excluding the mirror. Harry had made sure to obliterate her mind long ago to erase any memory of Malfoy and Davis's kidnapping, but memory charms could be broken.

Dumbledore most likely suspected his participation, and though Tonks would not be able to reveal it directly, her description of him given truth serum would incriminate him past reasonable doubt. The worst, however, was her knowledge of the abandoned part of the third floor and his acquisition of *Magicus*, both of which he had revealed numerous times to her. It wouldn't be long until he would be exposed, and Malfoy and Davis found.

His fragile house of cards was rapidly falling apart.

.....

Tonks did not return that night, leaving Harry increasingly paranoid.

His time was quickly running out, and Harry knew it would be either Dumbledore finding the two bound Slytherins or Voldemort's newest attack on the castle. He had considered killing Malfoy and Davis, but had abstained.

Killing Slughorn had been a *necessity*, as he often reminded himself, and wasn't a reflection of him. Still, the thought remained.

The two purebloods were currently chained up in separate classrooms, Kreacher bringing them food to eat. Dobby was not bound to him, and was liable to spilling the secret.

If it all failed, Harry's only route was to escape into the universe on the other side of the mirror.

He took *Magicus* out of his suitcase, feeling the rough cover brush harshly against his fingertips. He spread it open, flipping through the pages. His eyes caught on some of the spells, an almost overwhelming force making him falter slightly. It was minutes later, when he realized what he was reading, that he broke the hold on his mind and moved on through the book, finally making it to the passage he had been studying.

Trying his best to clear his mind of the material he had observed, he closed the curtain around the bed and cast a quick privacy charm before reading.

"...Our attempts to disrupt the magic around the mirror had no effect on its functionality, leading us to believe that it was enchanted in such a way as to feed of some kind of external source. With no internal store of magic, the only explanation is some other realm entirely.

Should this be true, our earlier hypothesis that the mirror merely shows another world could be valid. If it were truly connected in some way to another realm, it would be far easier just to show this other universe rather than attempting to generate an image on its own based on the viewer.

While the various theories concerning alternate realities have all attempted to explain a method in reaching said places, we may have come upon an artifact that can help us create a gateway! Of course, it would only allow passage from the donor universe, but we may be able to create a route from our side as well..."

Harry skipped a few pages impatiently, knowing most of the content by experience. His fingers ached to skip the entire section and go back to reading about the enthralling magic, but he willed himself to continue.

"As the mirror draws its energy from another universe, our magic has no effect on it. However, we have found a subtle leak of magic from the enchantments that we have deduced has come from this other reality. Storing it into a crystal, we have found that we are now able to

alter the effect of the mirror. By pushing the crystal's magic into the mirror, we were able to briefly disrupt the enhancements before the magic from the other universe reestablished its flow."

Harry held no knowledge in storing magic within crystals, and doubted he would be able to learn the art within the space of a month. He flipped a couple more pages. With the expansion charm in effect, the research itself spread over several thousands pages alone...some of the more interesting rituals in further sections...Harry shut his eyes, fighting back the entrancing allure the book gave. He would have to focus if he was to learn anything.

"We have placed a monitoring charm on a common red apple, viewing its surroundings from a location out of the mirror's presence. The result was a green apple. Strangely, a monitoring charm placed on another object in the room away from the mirror reveals that object's otherworldly form. This indicates that the mirror uses some form of magical detection to find a separate world for each individual viewer. Non-magical objects do not result in a change, as seen by the mirror failing to react to the apple without a monitoring charm."

Harry nodded somewhat to himself. The hypothesis certainly made sense. It was unreasonable to think that there was one universe in which every single magical thing in existence was sitting in front of the same mirror, just waiting for its alternate counterpart to see it. This was reassuring as well – no other person could come after him in his alternate world.

"Unlike the Mirror of Erised, with which some of our members have had contact with, the Mirror of Etisoppo cannot create an image for multiple viewers simultaneously. The first magical presence within its field of effect holds it attention, keeping the connection to the other world open as long as the original viewer is present nearby..."

Harry's mind went back to the problem of modifying the mirror's magic. Without crystals, he would be unable to capture any of the leaking magic. He didn't have any sample of the other world's magic to manipulate and use.

Unless...

Harry's eyes fell to his trunk. Tearing it open, he rummaged through his things until he found an old crumpled note from long ago. It seemed ages since he had first received it.

Dearest Counterpart,

You seem to have forgotten to mention your name during our activities. Regardless, I was hoping to grace your presence once more sometime in the near future...perhaps the same time next week? I do hope you like me.

I certainly enjoy what is mine.

Yourself,

Jamie Potter

Harry ignored the rage that grew in him at the last line, forcing himself to cast a common counterfeit identification charm on it. It was a charm used often by consumers to verify the authenticity of a product. Many Goblins also were in the habit of employing wizards to verify galleons en masse to keep fraud low.

The soft white light seemed to project out of his wand slowly, the rich, thick parchment absorbing it within moments. Within seconds, the note gave off a slight red glow, indicating that it was conjured.

All of Harry's anger disappeared, smothered away. Gingerly stowing the note in his cloak, a dark smile lit his lips as he set about reading *Magicus* once more. Harry would find out how to tear open the mirror's portal.

I certainly enjoy what is mine.

And then, perhaps, he would look into some of the other information the book contained. Just a small glimpse.

.....

Albus Dumbledore looked over his glasses at the small looking Auror sitting across from him.

“Tonks?” he asked kindly. The *girl*, he realized, fidgeted slightly before looking up at him with green eyes. *Like Harry’s...*

“What’s happened to you? Has anyone” - he avoided saying Harry - “hurt you in any way?”

She seemed to sink a bit, changing forms to an oddly familiar black haired girl unconsciously. Kingsley moved toward her from behind but Albus waved him off.

The similarity hit him at the moment, and he realized that Tonks was assuming a feminine form of Harry Potter. The only explanation he could think of was that she was unconsciously fixated on the boy.

But Tonks, while not the strongest willed, was not in anyway emotionally weak. Even with her depression following Black’s death and Remus Lupin’s consistent evasion of her attention, she had been relatively normal, if only a bit subdued.

Harry’s behavior as of late was alarming, and Albus knew he had to curb the direction the boy was headed. The world could not afford another Tom Riddle.

Albus’ sharp blue eyes bored deep into Tonks’ own.

.....

With the Professors and extra Aurors combing the school more than ever, Harry knew he had to take care of his *prisoners* – a foreign and almost shocking term - quickly.

For the past few days, he had starved Davis while feeding Malfoy with a greater amount of food than usual. He needed the boy to look healthy, so he had taken him off the chains and let him wander in the small classroom.

Harry dressed quickly, fastening his robe and picking up his wand. His eyes fell back to the concealed *Magicus*, and he couldn’t stop the hand that reached to pick it up.

"Harry Potter sir mustn't touch it," a voice hissed from the dark. Harry spun to meet a pair of large green eyes. *"You is falling...you is something else..."* The tight, high pitched voice was whimpering now.

Dobby again.

The elf looked like he was fighting some internal war. *"Stop...please Harry potter sir..."* The elf almost begged before looking at him sadly.

Dobby had a disturbing, manic look, and Harry found himself threatened. He lifted his wand, quietly casting a silencing charm around them. The circumstances were less than ideal. To be discovered meant more suspicion.

The small magical creature's ears drooped even more, eyes hardening slightly before he disappeared with an uncharacteristic silent pop.

Harry stood there, unsure of what to feel. Dobby wouldn't inform anyone, would he? The elf was devoted, and owed its freedom to him.

He had waited for days until the patrols were set so the stairs were not in view when it swung open. He couldn't let this opportunity go to waste. Casting one more look at the shadows where Dobby had stood, Harry threw on his invisibility cloak to slink out of the common room.

He had scarcely made it out of the dormitory when he heard another voice.

"I know you're there, Harry."

Harry stood still, head turned toward the source of the sound. He saw Ginny appear out of the shadows with a slight smirk on her face. His wand seemed to grow warm on its own volition.

"Come here, love."

Harry realized with disgust that she was still under the impression he was under her love potion. A love potion applied for so long only strengthens, and she must have thought he would be a virtual slave

by now. He considered breaking the illusion, but he knew it would cause commotion he didn't need. With Dobby a rogue player, any more negative attention would be his downfall.

He forced himself to walk over, shedding his cloak. Ginny's cheeks seemed to glow for a moment, and she indulged herself in something she had obviously wanted to do for a long time.

Kiss him.

Her warm, short tongue entered his mouth crudely and suddenly, and Harry fought the urge to bite it and tear it out. Her hands wandered lower across his body, making his eyes narrow. Things were going a bit further than he anticipated.

Plans could be changed, he reflected, and this seemed like an ample opportunity to get rid of two problems with one stroke.

Harry broke the kiss and pulled back quickly, whispering into her ear in his most enticing voice. His fingers ran down her back for the added effect.

"I have somewhere I want to show you," he breathed into her ear. She shivered slightly at his tone, and looked up at him in eagerness. Her plain brown eyes had a crazed look, and she agreed with a trite nod.

.....

Draco Malfoy woke up, his eyes slowly focusing on the world. His head pounded and his arms and legs were bound once more. The elf, it seemed, had reattached them and moved him to a more familiar room.

In front of him stood a blurry figure. Blinking his eyes a bit, his vision fixed on Harry Potter. Draco let out a snarl, struggling against his binds.

"Potter! Let me go this instant!"

Potter didn't seem to notice him, raising his wand slightly. He was partly concealed in his invisibility cloak, and his wand was glowing somewhat.

Draco paled at the gesture, before biting back his fear and letting out a retort.

"Are you going to kill me, Potter? Is that what you want?"

Potter's eyes locked on him suddenly, as if noticing him for the first time. His face broke into a smile.

"Oh no...You see, it appears that you are a danger to me at the moment. Should anyone find you, I'd be facing serious criminal charges. It's not just that either. I don't like you. But that shouldn't come as much of a surprise. However, I won't kill you."

Draco stared down the length of Potter's famous holly wand and found himself wondering if all the things it had been credited with were true.

"What do you mean you're not going to kill me? There's no one else here!" he said with a slight tremor in his voice. He wasn't afraid of Potter.

Potter ignored him again, looking down at him as if he were some object he needed to study. The Gryffindor seemed to be struggled with something. As if resolving some deep conflict, he spoke again.

"I'll give you six months at most," he murmured. The voice didn't sound gleeful at all.

Draco's heart plummeted in his chest. "Wha – what are you going to do to me? What do you mean I only have six months left to live?" There were some nasty, irreversible curses that took their toll at you over a period of time. Gradual necrosis was the least of his worries.

His voice seemed to break Potter out of his thinking once more. Looking slightly annoyed, he gave a harsh, mirthless laugh. "I'm not talking about how long you've got to live, Malfoy, I'm talking about how long you're going to suffer before you die."

Before he could respond, he felt something white wash over him. He felt lightheaded for a moment, adrift in some weightless word. His awareness was dimming, but he felt something inside him fight back, resisting the powerful lull. The blanketing feeling suddenly snapped and disappeared.

He found himself staring at the holly wand again. Potter looked slightly sickened and oddly disappointed. The emotions died out, however, and the wand fell down. The imperius, he realized. He felt an oddly placed burst of pride he had been able to resist it. The implications of Potter's actions suddenly hit him, however.

"You...you used an unforgivable!"

Potter turned around, waving off the statement. "With you batting for the other team and lacking any inclination to fuck a girl, I brought it upon myself to help."

The black haired wizard stood there for a moment in silent apprehension before flicking his wand slightly. In the corner of the room, Draco noticed a girl appear as if from thin air.

Potter looked at his wand before throwing it out toward Draco and walking back to him.

"Imperio!"

The same force washed against his mind, only stronger and much more focused. Draco grit his teeth and fought against the deceitful bliss. It seems hours later when the feeling disappeared.

He panted heavily, his head pounding more than ever.

Potter seemed almost thoughtful for a moment. Shifting his wand to his other hand, he stepped forward and struck him hard in the side of his face.

Draco's head reeled, and within seconds another imperius curse took his mind.

.....

Harry's constant use of the imperius had worn down the pureblood.

It had taken this and a couple of well placed hits to the head before the Slytherin had succumbed to the force of his inexperienced casting. Slughorn had been heavily inebriated, facilitating the process and making it easy for him to establish control.

The blonde's words struck him deep, however.

Unforgivable...

He had repeatedly cast an unforgivable and robbed people of their free will, of the use of their bodies. He had killed, and would soon do so again.

A simple thought had Malfoy moving towards the unconscious figure in the corner. Placing the boy's own wand back in Malfoy's hands, he silently commanded him to begin. Harry pulled on his cloak once more and disappeared.

He tried to ignore the happenings behind him, but he inadvertently found himself watching. It wasn't something he could ignore, his whims being followed, his will commanded. He had power.

The girl awoke as Malfoy savagely tore off her robes, screaming as she realized what was occurring. The blonde grabbed her red hair and pulled it backwards, grinning slightly as he entered her.

A trickle of euphoria crept through Harry, growing to a torrent as the imperius took an ever greater hold. It was difficult to fight the imperius when you enjoyed yourself. The Slytherin kept her pinned down as he thrust in relentlessly, her cries of pain echoing in the empty Ancient Runes classroom.

Magic pounded through his mind, the unforgivable beating through his veins. It was overpowering, and it increased to the point where all thoughts of morality and righteousness faded away.

His wand, hands...his entire body buzzed with power, and Harry realized just what Lord Voldemort meant all those years ago...

There is no good or evil, only power and those too weak to seek it...

.....

Hours seemed to pass until Ginny Weasley went unconscious, her eyes vacant and lost. Her legs were bloody, her breath weak.

Harry willed Malfoy back, clothing him in distaste with a flick of his own wand. Concentrating on the bond, he broke it, returning the boy to his own mind.

The glassy expression retreated, his dull demeanor bursting back into life.

He looked over to the corner in confusion, as if remembering what had happened. A small sound of horror seemed to escape his throat, and he started patting himself frantically for his wand.

“You’ll never get away with this...they’ll find you...” he snarled.

Harry watched impassively as he drew his wand and attempted to cast a low grade dark curse. Batting it aside with ease, Harry bound his body temporarily and silenced him.

His eyes gleamed malevolently, and he smiled as Malfoy went pale.

“I won’t? I beg to differ. Who will *ever* believe *you* over me? Anything you say will be attributed to the famous rivalry we have. *I* am the Boy-Who-Lived, after all, and you are just a Slytherin. This is just the kind of thing a Slytherin would do.”

He was rewarded with a muffled scream, the pureblood’s purpled face reminding him of his Uncle.

“Besides, I took the liberty of having you use some of the more frowned upon curses in your repertoire. And without your father to save you, you’ll be convicted for sure. I know you won’t take Veritaserum – you’d disgrace the rest of Slytherin House and expose some of the Death Eaters – something I’m sure Lord Voldemort won’t like at all.”

Malfoy's head drooped slightly, small tears flowing from his eyes. He grinned widely at Draco's utterly defeated and horrified look.

"Oh cheer up, Drakie!" Harry cooed, pinching his cheek lightly, "At least you'll be with Daddy!"

Sending a powerful reviving spell at Weasley, he lifted Malfoy's silencing charm and disappeared in the swirl of his cloak.

.....

"Albus!"

Dumbledore retreated out of Tonk's mind and looked at a frantic Minerva McGonagall.

"What is it, Minerva?" he asked in a concerned voice. "What's gone wrong?"

"It's Malfoy...we found him. He's...he's hurt Ms. Weasley badly. She escaped him, however, and came directly to us."

The headmaster's shoulders drooped. Flooing both Malfoy Manor and the Burrow, he notified the affected parties and sent for a team of On Duty Aurors. Sending Shacklebolt to subdue Draco Malfoy, he sat back into his seat tiredly.

Tonks moved somewhat in her seat, her expression blank and her mouth slightly open. Dumbledore probed her mind once more with a renewed vigor.

"Tell me more about this hidden part of our third floor..."

.....

A week had passed, but Harry could feel his days drying up.

He was lucky Malfoy had been convicted as he had. Even with Dumbledore protesting on the boy's behalf, the Wizengamot had unanimously ruled guilty.

With Ginny hurting herself terribly during an attempted suicide, a student sent to Azkaban, and another still missing, Hogwarts was in a somber mood.

Dumbledore's lessons had ended abruptly, and Harry could see in his eyes the same look the man had given Tom Riddle when he had applied for the Defense position thirty years ago.

.....

The flames in the hearth licked at the darkened bricks, a thick layer of soot covering the inner walls of the fireplace.

Harry sat watching the fire, its flickering light casting a sinister shadow behind him in the otherwise dark room. It was far past midnight, but Harry hardly slept much these days.

And why would he? He had magic to sustain him. Looking down at his wand, he felt a ripple of energy pass through his arm and into his hand, flowing through the dark wood. He had power, and it was intoxicating.

But it wasn't enough, he knew...Jamie was...still something *more*. He knew she was something else entirely, her dark tendrils of thought *breathing* magic, speaking it.

He closed his eyes, but all he could see were the long, winding scripture he had read. The words, the spells, he could remember *each and every one!* Backwards and forwards, wand movements, description...they were all etched into his mind.

He couldn't think of anything else, and he feared its very essence somewhere far within, a small bright, uncorrupted portion of his soul. This was the last stop, he knew. No one went back after this.

Imperio...

He took a sharp breath at the very thought, his hand twitching in unconscious anticipation. Oh, it was enthralling, the words of power seeping into his mind at every opportunity. He had stopped himself

from casting it numerous times, freezing his hands as he fought with the incredible compulsion to just give way, to release himself.

He felt so trapped, so imprisoned...it was as if his limbs had been bound to his chest tightly, his muscles burning with the itch for use.

If only just a little *taste*...

Harry dropped his wand entirely, the slender piece of holly giving a soft clatter, rolling away toward the arcing flames. He gripped his armrests in the effort to stay himself. No...he wouldn't.

He was...he didn't have to indulge, not now, not today. His eyes fell on his wand and his teeth clenched tightly.

No, not at all...but perhaps just a little bit...harmless really...it'd help him sleep so he could focus on getting rid of the books he could never seem to throw away.

His breath was uneven now, and his body burned with aching desire. The dark wood rolled dangerously close towards the fire, its orange light shining softly on its marred finish.

He grabbed it and left the Gryffindor common room.

.....

"By casting the Protean Charm on the crystal, and another corresponding one on the mirror, we were able to drain the magic back into the mirror, disrupting its enchantments enough for us to use our own spells..."

Harry's mind wandered as he experimented with Tracey in the shadowy classroom.

Her back arched in the delicate of ways, her thin, starved body shaking in the effort of screaming. And yet, he was amused to find the boundless, incredible *love* that sat in her blue eyes. His presence was enough to complete her, to fulfill her any fantasy.

A heavy, ink-like black ether seemed to encase her as he whispered yet another spell, his wand humming with energy. Her body was enshrouded, her voice sinking away.

And suddenly, it seemed to dive within her, tearing through her skin. Davis's fingers clawed at the stone floor, blood running down her hands as she convulsed. The curse did not seem to leave any physical traces, but it was clear she was suffering.

An unseen nightmare grappled at her mind, and despite it all, she continued to stare at him in hope, her clenched eyes widening every so often to drink in his being.

"We have punctured through the portal! Our apple has joined its other on the mirror's alternate side. By staying far enough to force the mirror to focus on the apple first, we managed to send it over."

"Our spells seemed to be absorbed by the mirror at first, but we found that more powerful curses seemed to overwhelm the mirror to the point where the barrier was temporarily pierced..."

Small hands attempted to encircle his ankles.

Harry looked down at a pained looking, teary eyed, dirty and bloody Tracey Davis. His wand dipped slightly, and the curse ended.

"...No one wants to volunteer to pass through...and some are concerned about our contamination of these other worlds and how it may affect our own magic...I have taken it upon myself to go..."

The proximity wards he had set rang in his mind. There was an intruder.

Kicking Davis away off of him, he ran out the classroom's door, throwing back on his invisibility cloak and silencing his steps.

A curse grazed his cheek, blood trickling down his chin.

Looking behind him, he saw Kingsley Shacklebolt behind him in pursuit, seemingly unaffected by the cloak.

“...We announce the death of our leader. His body fell lifeless to the floor the instant of his passage to the other side. We had warned that living beings would not be able to sustain going against the flow of magic. We can only assume his magic was torn from him by the mirror as he attempted to pass, much like our monitoring charms failed when the apple passed through...”

Darting behind a wall, he cast the same curse he had used on Tracey. The man seemed surprised for a moment, before falling to the floor. Another Auror appeared behind him and cancelled the spell before it took hold.

Turning to run again, he met yet another Auror behind him. The tall, thin man looked at him emotionlessly before sending a modified stunner at him. A thin beam of red flew towards him rapidly.

Absorbing the charm on the tip of his wand, he performed a corkscrew motion with it and sent a weaker, normal stunner back, running toward him as he cast it.

Pushing the surprised man to the floor as he fumbled for a shield, he jumped into another darkened hallway and conjured a wooden figure of himself. Banishing it towards the oncoming group as they entered the passageway, he took the spell fire off him for a moment and crossed to the large, winding hall at the center of the abandoned floor.

Shacklebolt had apparently gone around them, as he reappeared in front of him. Ropes flew out of the grayish wand toward Harry.

Diving behind a statue, he watched in satisfaction as they grabbed a hold of it instead. With a stab of his wand, the statue was sent flying toward the Auror, who promptly vaporized it with an overpowered Reductor curse.

Harry knew he had to cross if he was to survive. But he needed time alone with the mirror if he was going to do it. Losing the Aurors was paramount.

The three of them cast a volley of basic disarming and subduing spells at him, forcing him to run to the side and back through the hallway they had arrived from. Harry waved his wand with a flourish,

shouting *Nox* at the torches. He could hear the Aurors curse and light up the area up themselves, losing sight of him in the sudden blackness.

Knocking over the stored chairs, desks, paintings and statues as he passed, Harry impeded them enough to find his way back to the painting of the Manticore.

Just as he was about to open the door in the wall, another spell slammed into his back, sending him sprawling. He wheezed as the concussion curse drove out all the air from his lungs.

Turning back to his attacker, he saw a fourth Auror – Dawlish, he recognized – smirk at him. The man didn't even attempt to signal his comrades over, most likely in an attempt to secure the credit for himself.

"*Stupefy!*" He intoned arrogantly, not bothering to keep the spell silent.

The red beam of light raced at him, barely giving Harry enough time to put up a rudimentary *Protego*.

In an instant, Harry knew he was defeated. The shield had cost him too much time, and he saw his assailant begin to cast another curse. A bluish globe seemed to gather in front of Dawlish, the man's face leering in triumph.

In the dim light, however, he missed a small figure behind him. The person tackled the man from behind and bit savagely at his hand.

Dawlish screamed in pain and threw Davis off. Her eyes were wild, her body possessing a wild strength. The Auror cursed and shrugged the girl's attacks off once more, slamming her to the ground.

She cried in pain, making Harry feel a twinge of fury. Words raced through his mind, and his arm seemed to move on its own accord.

A sickly brown light flashed towards Dawlish, snaking into his body much like the other one had. Dawlish's eyes went wide, and he started to shake. Inky blackness seemed to flow from his eyes, his ears leaking the same substance.

Frothing at the mouth, cuts seemed to open themselves on the man's robes and body, oozing thickly. The darkness started streaming from his nose and mouth as well, joining the rivulets from his body. Coughing and gasping for air, he fell to the floor and into the small onyx puddle gathering at his feet.

Davis shrieked and stepped backwards, pressing herself into the wall. She looked at Harry in fear, the first emotion he had seen from her other than adoration.

He felt power gathering in his wand, the desire to finish the Auror simmering in his mind. The words flowing from him effortlessly, Harry's wandtip emitted a terrifying black energy. Just as he was about to release it, he was blown backwards into the hidden door behind him.

Dobby stood defiant in front of him, his hand out like it had been when he had protected Harry from Lucius Malfoy.

"You must not harm him, Harry Potter!" He hissed. "You is a *bad* wizard! Evil!"

His ears seemed to droop in sorrow at the action, eyes watering in pity. Harry got to his feet angrily, sneering at the elf. Leveling his wand at the group once more, he turned around and disappeared into the doorway.

.....

"Protea!"

A small circle appeared on the slip of paper, branding itself on the rich parchment with a slight sizzling noise.

Moving toward the mirror, Harry cast the same charm on the mirror's frame. On both the paper and the frame, two interlocking circles appeared. They glowed briefly before the note started becoming transparent.

As he waited, Harry reflected on Dobby's words. They bothered him, he knew, but the sight of the mirror washed all his worries away. It was time to leave this world behind.

Harry watched as the beautifully written words seemed to fade away along with the conjured paper. The note's transparency increased rapidly, reminding Harry of the Tom Riddle he had met in the Chamber of Secrets.

He briefly wondered if he would be able to stand against him now in a single duel. The thought seemed to fade away into another, and he found Riddle's smirk morphing into Jamie's cruel smile.

Jamie Potter...

Harry leveled his wand and cast the most powerful curse he could think of at the mirror, fueled by all his hate and desire for revenge.

The Killing Curse roared out of his wand, filling him with a sickly pride. The green light impacted the mirror, spreading a ripple outwards to the edges of the frame. Its surface seemed to become fluid at that moment, a pulsing wall of molten glass.

Steeling himself, Harry threw himself through before the note disappeared completely.

Freezing water seemed to flow around his body as he passed, and he could feel the mirror trying to suck the very life out of him, demanding payment for his illegal passage. His scar burst in pain, and he could feel his own magic fight it off. He couldn't die. Not yet.

Just as he thought it would leech him dry, he fell through, tumbling onto the cold stone floor. In Jamie's existence.

Harry laughed.

.....

A/N: The quote in the beginning is completely original. I had been looking for some biblical, ancient sounding quote that applied

somewhat to the events of the chapter. Failing, I just decided to write my own.

Review!

Amerision

Chapter Six: In Darkness Kind

"Hatred is the madness of the heart." Lord Byron

Harry walked up the dark, wet stairwell with unease, fingers drifting across the damp stone walls.

This world felt different than his own. His physical senses told him otherwise - the air still smelled of dust, the inky blackness still present. But when he closed his eyes, he could feel the difference, the deafening sense of being a foreigner, an alien in this strange new existence. Perhaps it was *her* presence.

As he reached the last few steps, he pressed his dirty, cut palms on the icy granite of the doorway, lightly pushing out to swing it open. He stepped out into the hallway, minding his cloak as the door swept shut with a heavy thump. He flicked his wand, producing a soft glow from its tip, shattering the somber black shroud that surrounded him.

Stepping into the hallway, he looked around with rampant curiosity, shining his wand into the very corridor he had escaped mere moments before. Everything stood in its place, untouched. The statues reigned majestically from their elevated pedestals, the suits of armor clattering periodically on their own. Relief flooded Harry, wiping away the fears of returning to the unwelcoming, hostile world he had just escaped. He began walking once more, eager to explore and take part of this universe. Here he was unopposed, innocent, and most importantly, unknown.

A dream, his most precious, was close to coming true. He shivered in anticipation, a series of images running through his head as he contemplated the various ways he could confront his other. Months of thought had still not produced a definite plan, despite the drive Harry had to succeed; Jamie, for all her malice and subtle power was still a student of Hogwarts, a seventh year among many others. It was quite impossible to produce a solid course of action with so little knowledge of her world.

Harry had poured his heart out to her. She knew every last detail of his life, his thoughts, his memories, his very being. She had seen the barest threads of Harry Potter, had crooned her sympathy and understanding while clutching at his darkest memories. She had been exactly what he had wanted - someone to listen and to relate with in his weakest moments.

He, however, knew very little of her life beyond a few events she considered highlights, such as ending Bellatrix's life. Harry only had a vague understanding that many of the major events in his world was mirrored here as well, only with slight differences due to the differences between Harry and his other. He was woefully unprepared.

He would, of course, have to observe the world and study Jamie closer. If he was to triumph, he would have to devise a way to get to her, to strip her of her pride, her freedom, her self-respect. Harry's mind buzzed with the tantalizing possibilities.

Not yet.

With a bated breath, he walked through the long winding corridors until he emerged through a brick wall on the second floor. Shooting a quick glance at his surroundings, he dashed up the various stairs, sending an apprehensive look at the depths below. The dim light of a wand was moving in the stairwell far below, lighting up the higher levels as the unknown person ascended.

Harry ran up as quietly as he could, attempting to avoid being spotted by the quick moving person. Desperate, he cast a disillusionment spell on himself, and pressed himself against the wall once he reached the last set of stairs on the stairwell, near the fifth floor. If the magic hadn't been drained from his Invisibility Cloak, he wouldn't have had to rely on the vastly inferior spell.

To his surprise, Pansy Parkinson appeared at the top of the steps, looking around warily. Harry sank lower, extinguishing his wandlight and immersing himself into the unlit corner of the hallway. Apparently satisfied, the Slytherin made her way to a nearby cupboard with an eager look. Looking around her once more, she disappeared inside.

Curiosity blossomed, and Harry moved closer to the closed door, casting a silencing charm on the entire corridor around him. Pressing his ear against the aged wood, Harry heard a brief groan, followed by the obvious sounds of a midnight tryst.

Pansy Parkinson was a Slytherin, and probably knew much about Jamie's habits and day to day activities. Although he was reasonably sure the two disliked each other, Harry knew from experience that loathing hardly served to make people ignorant of each other. At the very least, the girl knew the password to the Slytherin common room.

Making his decision, he made quick work of the locking charm and barged in, shining his bright wandlight into the couple's eyes. A stout Ravenclaw Harry wasn't familiar jumped backwards with his eyes shielded, one hand still beneath Pansy's robes. As she shrieked in surprise, Harry stunned the boy with a careless flick of his wand, throwing him further into the closet and binding him with several strands of rope.

Strolling into the now unconscious boy's place, Harry shamelessly picked up where his predecessor left off as Pansy watched helplessly, still frozen in shock. Whistling slightly, Harry examined her up and down with a critical eye before looking straight at her with a wide smile.

"A shame, you know," he said lightly, "What would your father think of such tartish behavior with these unsavory characters, Miss Parkinson?"

Harry looked at himself in the mirror, smoothing his robes and checking himself all over for anything that would stand out. His new Hogwarts robes, filched from the elves, were pristine and in excellent condition. His book bag, likewise, had been stolen from the library, left behind by a forgetful Hufflepuff. Harry made sure to change the design a bit and keep some of the textbooks for show. Among the hundreds of students at Hogwarts, it was highly unlikely for anyone to give him more than a second look.

Casting a cooling charm on himself for the heat, Harry left the Room of Requirement, taking the most crowded route he could remember to the Quidditch Field.

After hours of ceaseless interrogation, he had extracted a rather vague history of the world and its inhabitants, including Lord Voldemort and the Death Eaters, the Order of the Phoenix, and his counterpart.

Many things were the same, but so many others were different. Jamie had never instituted the DA in their fifth year, as Harry had expected, but was also the Captain of the Quidditch team. He faintly recalled her comments about Quidditch in their first meeting.

Jamie hadn't lived with the Dursleys for all her life before Hogwarts either; Pansy had confided that she had been sent to the care of Augusta Longbottom, Neville's grandmother, after Petunia had died in a freak accident. She had stayed with the family since the age of eleven, later becoming the old woman's sole focus of attention after Neville had died along with Ginny in the Chamber of Secrets. Jamie had come out unharmed in both deaths.

Cedric Diggory had also survived the Tri-Wizard tournament, apparently never having reached the cup due to extensive injuries he had sustained in a duel with Victor Krum. Pansy had muttered darkly that everyone knew Jamie was behind it all, but nobody could prove it, not with the favoritism and outright trust she received from Dumbledore.

A pang of envy curled inside of him at the fact that Jamie had been able to remain in Dumbledore's graces for so long despite her twisted nature. Harry had been the subject of a manhunt into the bowels of Hogwarts, at the whim of the Dursleys in his childhood, starved and mistreated throughout his summers.

The envy withered back into customary hatred.

Pansy's information included a detailed list of practice dates, one of which Harry planned to attend himself. Pushing past a couple of first years, he exited the castle, ducking his face as McGonagall walked by.

The path to the fields was a well-worn one, and Harry briefly remembered the times he and Ron had crept back and forth the days before before Quidditch games for extra practice. He realized he had little here, no friends, no support from the Order, no protection against Lord Voldemort. He had only his wand, his magic to serve him.

Approaching the tall, white washed stands, Harry leaned against a post, observing quietly. Harry could see in the faint sunlight several players from the Slytherin team, their dark green robes a stark contrast to the heavy, grey clouds above them.

The Slytherin team was holding its last practice, the blurs of their three chasers, most of who Harry recognized, scoring on the green clad Keeper while Crabbe and Goyle served as beaters like in his own realm. The seeker was no where to be found. He looked downward.

Harry hand gripped his wand tightly in his pocket, his jaw clenching suddenly.

A female figure stood on the ground, Firebolt in hand. Her head was cocked, face plastered with a cruel smile as she ridiculed the efforts of the Keeper in front of the entire team.

Harry could feel his heart pounding in chest, and he vaguely understood he was becoming nervous.

Why?

He wasn't afraid of her. He didn't find her opinions important at all. He didn't care what she thought. Of him, of *anything*. He wasn't her plaything anymore. She didn't hold power over him. He corrected his slouch and set his shoulders subconsciously, smoothing his robes once more.

No power at all.

Harry waited until the other players had left before letting himself into the locker room.

He paused near the door, watching his counterpart expertly prune the bristles of the Firebolt laid across her lap, a gleaming replica of his own. She was clad in her Hogwarts robes now, skin still wet from a recent shower as she sat with her back facing him. She stopped as he entered, straightening slightly and looking up. She turned around slowly, a knowing grin curling her lips.

She had changed little, he saw. Her black hair fell down past her shoulders, as dark and shining as he remembered. As she stood, Harry could see she had gained some height, coinciding with his own slight growth. But her image was identical to the one that had plagued his dreams, eyes flashing and leaving him panting for more.

"Harry," she said quietly.

He tore the distance between them in a few moments, pushing her back against the wall, fingers surrounding her throat. He pressed into her delicate skin as he had thousands of time before, fantasy after fantasy. It felt too good to be true.

She didn't struggle at all, relaxing into his touch, eyes looking above him lazily. Anger flooded his mind at the lack of response. He ached to make her *fear*. He moved closer, almost nose to nose.

"Hello Jamie." He growled. She merely smiled, not bothering to meet his gaze. "Look at me," he said gruffly, shaking her. She ignored him, smiling even wider.

"I said *look at me!*" he shouted, bringing her to his chest for a moment before throwing her at the wall again, pinning her in place with his body. This time she responded, turning her head straight to his, foreheads touching. Her cheery look hadn't faded at all. She brought her hands up Harry's back, slowly bringing them up his sides.

"You followed." She said happily. Harry threw off her hands viciously with a snarl.

"You followed?" he mocked, pushing her again. "Of course I followed. After what you did, you didn't think I wouldn't come and return the favor?" He pulled down her damp hair, hard, bringing his mouth to her ear. "You thought I'd let you leave, just like that?"

Harry saw her licking her lips in the corner of his eye. After a brief moment, she replied proudly, whispering. "No, I planned on it. I wanted you to suffer. And look what I've made you into."

"You didn't do a *thing*!" He roared, knocking her into a nearby locker with the back of his hand. She fell to the ground, on her hands and knees. Harry ignored the flash of pain that tore through his face.

He grabbed the back of her robe and stood her up roughly. A long cut grazed her cheek, dark red blood seeping slowly from it. Harry's rage morphed to slight horror as he watched the cut heal itself, skin stitching itself back together as the blood disappeared, leaving no trace of any injury.

Jamie watched his sudden pause with amusement, languishing in his grip.

"What have you done to yourself?" He asked with revulsion. There weren't many rituals that could grant this sort of power, and of them, the price was high. Too high. Harry's rage subsided for a moment as he stared at her in with a new feeling. He felt almost cheated of something.

She shook her head slightly before bowing her head forward, resting her chin on his shoulder. "The question is," she sighed into his ear, "Do you care?"

The words sunk in painfully. An animalistic savagery took hold of him suddenly, flooding him with denial and bringing back the outrage and anger that had surged through him before. He went for his wand, aching to burn that notion out of her mind, to instill some sort of respect, fear, *anything* to silence her wretched tongue.

Harry found himself knocked backwards to the cold, tiled floor, the sensation of a burn tearing through his abdomen, wand clattering away to the side. He looked up to see Jamie with her own wand, a faint curl of smoke from its tip. The slender length of wood was held between her two hands almost flush to her body. Her face was pinched slightly, as if in pain herself.

The look subsided as quickly as it came, replaced by the maddening, teasing smile she always held for him. He suddenly recalled her various endearments, her platitudes, the scores of faux concern. He leapt to his feet, aching to wipe the deceit of her face, the never ending *joke* that she always seemed to have for him.

A quick wave of her wand forced Harry back down, freezing him in a kneeling position, head facing upwards. She walked forward, lowering herself to him.

"Now now, my beloved counterpart," she laughed warmly, "There's no need bow to me. I don't expect any gratitude for my assistance." Her features showed no fear, a perfect image of radiant happiness that Harry knew was tainted with the blackest of hearts. Moving closer, she idly ran her hands into his hair, grazing his face softly with her fingers. Wild sensations flew through Harry's body, and he closed his eyes, locking his jaw together; He would rather die than give her the pleasure of seeing the feelings she was eliciting.

The seconds seemed to melt into hours before she released the binds with another wave of her wand, lifting his chin slowly, almost as if challenging him.

Harry wasted no time shoving her forcefully at the lockers and getting back to his feet. His eyes watered in fury as he approached her form. Jamie looked pleased with herself, wand held limply by her side, simply daring Harry to come forward.

He snatched her wand and threw it to the side. Pulling his fist back, Harry made to batter her down with brute force, to somehow beat her into submission, give her a taste of his humiliation. He was surprised when it stopped inches across from her face, held in an iron grip. His other arm was soon held in the same fashion.

She dug her nails into his wrists and brought him closer. Harry struggled, but couldn't overcome the augmented strength she had somehow imbued herself with. Soon he was flush against her, Jamie's body fitting perfectly against his. Her eyes were alight with excitement, with the same predatory, carnal gleam it had possessed the first time they had met.

"Why are you resisting?" She asked alluringly, voice like honey as she tried to capture his eyes. Harry finally relented and met her look with one of pure loathing. He spied a Holly wand under a nearby bench at the edge of his vision. Jamie ignored him and closed her eyes, placing her head under his chin, lips moving softly against his skin. His muscles clenched as he suppressed a shudder, tingles of pleasure rolling down his throat and into his body. "Don't you find me enjoyable?"

Harry could feel the strange, fuzzy warmth of their connection drifting across his senses, dulling his anger and caressing his mind. His other gave a soft, rolling sigh, melting into him. Her hands crept into his robes, digging under his robes and meeting skin, fingertips circling with agonizing slowness. A flourishing sense of excitement blossomed within him against his will.

Her ravenous mouth moved upwards, placing gentle kisses on his jawline as she ground herself against him. Harry tried to shut himself from her sensuous touch, but couldn't resist for long. He found himself responding. Shame and self-hatred mingled with the consuming arousal that gripped him. She was doing it again...taking his will away from him, controlling...

No!

Eyes screwed shut, he concentrated on his wand, images of Jamie's slick, warm body so close to his interrupting his thought. A brief surge of power flew through him, and he could hear the magical instrument clattering faintly.

He found his arms released, creeping around at their own volition. His right hand was pressed into the small of her back, tracing the indent of her spine upwards. She arched her back immediately, pressing her breasts against his chest as she exposed her neck.

His wand flew into his hand at that moment, allowing Harry to lean forward and press his wand against her throat. He looked down on her face in victory.

Jamie's pretty face was relaxed, skin flushed red, eyes half-closed. Her breath was heavy with arousal, and her pupils were dilated. She

didn't respond at all to his threatening gesture, and didn't bat an eyelid when he pressed her against the wall harder, trapping her. She continued toying with his body.

"What are you going to do now, Harry?" She murmured. "Are you going to kill me? Are you going to end your little nightmare and be free of me?"

He wanted to. He longed to simply end her life with a torturous curse and finish it. His quest would be complete. But he knew it would never be enough. Death was too lenient. He wanted more from her.

She pounced on his silence, finally opening her eyes and bringing her head forward. Malice filled the green orbs. "You *want* me Harry. You *need* me. You can't kill me." Bringing her face forward, she spoke again, brushing her lips against his before Harry pulled away, sticking his wand further into her neck. "You were planning to use the Dark Arts, weren't you?"

Lust filled her eyes as she continued. "How did it feel?" She asked throatily. "How did you like being *corrupted*? Did it burn in your veins at night, drive you mad from *desire*? Did you stare at your mudblood friend, aching to tear her apart and bathe in *power*?"

Harry's wand seemed to grow warm in his hand, and he could feel the raging darkness inside him begging to be set loose. He hated how it was all true, how he had somehow played into her hands again, let her best him even when she was at his mercy. Jamie's hands had moved to the side of his head, cupping his chin, gently stroking him.

A lecherous smile spread through her face as she whispered, eyes wild. "Did you embrace it, Harry? Did you *murder*? Murder because of *me*?" Jamie laughed at his enraged face as she brought her legs up and straddled his waist, using it as leverage to bring herself higher against the locker. She brought her arms around his head, tilting it backwards.

"Look what I've turned you into," she said softly, "I've made you more powerful than you could have ever been alone." She kissed him eagerly, drinking in deeper as she clasped his hair. Harry's mind was spinning again, overwhelmed with the curious sense of pleasurable

duality that echoed every touch, every kiss. Jamie's black hair hung around his face like an impenetrable curtain.

His hands grasped her body, exploring mindlessly, caressing without end. She mewled into his lips as he did so, stoking his arousal. He felt her reaching for his robes, taking control of the situation like she always did. Harry's eyes screwed shut as he realized his defeat. He didn't *need* her at all. She was wrong. His mind broke through the haze of warmth and pleasure as he broke the kiss, pushing her back away from him roughly. He raised his wand again, retreating backwards towards the door.

Jamie fell to the ground without his support, and she glared at him with true frustration. Harry's body screamed at him to go back, his arms all but shaking in withdrawal, but he held his place. He kept his wand leveled at her as he stepped away from his other. Something like pride filled him, spoiled only by the horrible sense of longing that seemed pervade his every limb.

Her frustration was gone as quickly as it came, however, and was replaced with the smooth, calm face she always reserved for him. She smirked at him as she sat up properly, buttoning parts of her robe up again. "You'll be back, Harry, like you always have. You're mine, my dear counterpart, mine forever. You'll come to see that one day."

He didn't answer.

Harry woke with a start in the empty classroom he had found, cold sweat clinging to his skin, lewd images of *her* from the day before fading from his mind.

He hadn't trusted the Room of Requirement, not after she knew of his presence. He didn't want to confront her again, not until he could formulate some kind of plan, gather some sort of information. He laughed at the thought, before his expression darkened and he slammed his fist on the conjured bed, bitterness and anger growing within him.

You don't even know what you want.

He'd been so close to just giving himself up to her, enjoying her like he always did, falling for her tempting charms. A part of him still regretted denying her, leaving himself unsatisfied, unfulfilled. He couldn't deny that he wanted her, wanted her to be his, wanted to make her scream in ecstasy as he enjoyed her mesmerizing body. But he wouldn't give himself up to her. He knew what she desired most was her freedom, her independence, her autonomy.

Jamie Potter planned for her future, one of great ambitions and even greater personal power; She could never be a follower for long. Harry could break her simply by denying her the right and forcing her to be second. All he had to do was establish some sort of control, magical or political. Constraint would mean devastation.

He needed more power, or something with leverage to even their positions; Harry was nothing in her world, and had very little to gamble but his own self - the very item Jamie wished as her own. He needed to know what she wanted with him. Harry sensed there was a reason she had lured him over.

More questions.

He left the room, engaging in the nightly walks he had come to enjoy. He almost wished he would see her again, quietly exploring the castle like himself as he had imagined her before. He couldn't risk it. Instead of going down to the third floor, Harry went upward, climbing the steps to the seventh floor. Harry hadn't explored the highest floor of the castle aside from the areas around the Room of Requirement. While not as expansive as the mysterious third floor, it still was relatively unused, most of it virtually unknown to students.

As he walked toward the Room of Requirement, however, Harry saw a figure with blonde hair in the distance looking around quickly, baring his wand nervously before disappearing into the large, wooden door. Harry could recognize the figure from anywhere. He cast a silencing charm on his feet as he moved to the opposite wall, aching to follow the Slytherin inside. All the secrecy and paranoia was alarming; what could the boy be possibly be doing?

The minutes stretched to what seemed like hours as Harry sat patiently, wand twirling between his fingers as he crouched in

preparation. He briefly considered another attempt at blackmail, using the boy to do his bidding and tell Harry of his other self's whereabouts. If Malfoy wasn't sleeping with the greasy Potions Master, he could always erase the boy's memories and send him on his way. A smile lit Harry's lips as he recalled the sweet vengeance he had enacted on the boy, sending him to prison for a quarter of a century.

A loud crash made Harry jump slightly, disrupting his thoughts. He watched in amazement and slight fear as several Death Eaters threw open the door and ran out of the Room of Requirement. Their white masks seemed to shine with light, maddened grins barely hidden. Their cloaks seemed to be made of shadow in the darkness, absorbing all the light around them. Harry could sense their dark power, feeling a grudging sense of respect for the wizards.

Malfoy came out last, closing the door to the room behind him. He looked nervous now, undoubtedly intimidated at Lord Voldemort's servants despite allegiance to his side. Running slightly to join the group, he fumbled with his wand before composing himself, smoothing his robes self-consciously. Pointing downward, he led the wizards to the stairs. Their own wands bared, the Death Eaters looked almost amused at the blonde, ignoring him completely as they chattered with each other in low tones. Seeming to come to a conclusion, the figures descending quickly, leaving Harry in their wake.

He was no longer the focus of any danger from the Dark Lord. These Death Eaters were of no consequence to him, and only presented a danger to the inhabitants of this world. Yet Harry felt compelled to follow them, to at least learn their purpose.

In his own world, they would undoubtedly be attacking him. In this one, however...Harry's thoughts drifted to his counterpart. Icy dread crept into the pit of his stomach before being wiped away in a flash of centering hate. It could not happen, but he didn't care about her, he *wouldn't* - he simply wanted her for himself, and that was all there was to it. With a silent growl, he jumped to his feet and followed the Death Eaters, making sure to keep out of sight.

Harry stood idly behind in the shadows, watching an exhausted looking Albus Dumbledore lose his wand.

He had followed them to foot of the Astronomy Tower, where Draco Malfoy stood on his own, swearing to kill the Headmaster. The Death Eaters had been confronted by the Order and where occupied downstairs. A freak thunderstorm had apparently gain force as well, sending long streaks of lightning around them.

Harry carefully applied an impervious charm to his person, not wanting his clothes to drip and give away his presence in the torrent of rain; He knew he could kill both of the figures in front of his with ease at this point, but he also realized they wouldn't be alone for long - the Order had been all but slaughtered in front of his eyes, many of them sustaining injuries or falling victim to deadly spells. It was such a clever plan, one that Harry was sure would succeed favorably to Voldemort's forces.

A giddy feeling swelled within him as he began to feel like a spectator to some grand sport, making him relax somewhat, a trace of a grin curling his lips. He couldn't tell who he wanted to see defeated more - Dumbledore, for his doubtless interference in his activities, or Malfoy, for simply being the scum he was. Harry still didn't understand how the blonde had managed to outduel the old wizard, or why the latter had wasted his only chance with a seemingly failed spell. His only real pleasure had come in the fact that Dumbledore seemed to be the sole target of the raid.

A triumphant yell followed by an "*Avada Kedavra!*" came from the doorway, cluing Harry in to the approach of the other Death Eaters - Malfoy seemed to notice this as well and toughened his stance, bellowing against the calm, logical words of the figure sprawled before him.

The Death Eaters spilled past the doorway soon after, shouting and laughing with each other, pleased with their success. Some had their masks ripped off, but of them Harry could only identify Rodolphus Lestrange. A vicious, hairy looking man that could only be a werewolf was also present, his chin running with blood.

"Go on, Draco," they said in various tones and accents, some supportive, others ridiculing him and questioning his manhood. Harry could see the sweat dribbling down his temple, his eyes closed. Dumbledore had also fell silent, but was looking elsewhere, apparently into an empty corner opposite of himself.

The werewolf sniffed something in the air and looked in Harry's general direction, eliciting a slight twang of fear in his stomach. Before long, however, the *creature's* eyebrows came to together in confusion, and he joined Dumbledore's look in the corner with raw curiosity.

"He can't do it, the bloody ponce. Let me!" Rodolphus pushed Malfoy to the side impatiently, sending him crashing to the floor. Just as he leveled his wand to perform the Killing Curse, a dark blur of light knocked his wand down, blocking the attack.

"The Dark Lord left us with specific instructions."

Everyone turned to see Severus Snape stroll in, his sleeves peeled back to reveal the Dark Mark on his arm. His hair fell lankly to the sides of his face as it always did, skin with a sickly pallor. It was reassuring to see Snape was just as repulsive in this world as his own. Harry watched in amusement as the disgusting wizard's eyes flickered to Malfoy with concern, confirming his suspicions about their relationship.

"And those are?" A massive Death Eater asked eagerly, damp light hair spilling from the side of his mask. He was gripping his wand tightly, caught up in the bloodlust. Magic crackled wildly from the top of his wand, conjuring an odd glow to light his crazed face.

Snape made his way to the front of the crowd, crouching down near the nearly unconscious headmaster. Harry ached to know what had reduced the legendary man to such a state. "Our forces have had a long and *painful* history with Albus Dumbledore," he said in an oily, subdued voice. A pleased, sadistic look then gripped his face. "As such, our Lord has graced us with the opportunity to make him *suffer*."

Dumbledore groaned weakly in response, mumbling something that sounded like pleading. Harry's heart tumbled with excitement at the sound, elation and anticipation filling his mind. A curious sense of duplicity struck him at the moment, leaving him reeling. He looked around suspiciously.

Snape stood suddenly, scanning his surroundings with practiced ease. Dropping his wand into his hand from his sleeve, he flicked it toward the direction Dumbledore and the werewolf had looked.

Harry's breath caught in his throat.

Jamie appeared suddenly, standing completely still, a devious smile on her lips that suggested she had been there all along. A black cloak hugged her body, concealing the traditional Hogwarts uniform beneath. The familiar looking invisibility cloak fell down around her and onto the floor, where it gathered around her feet.

Dumbledore gasped weakly, face frozen in horror and sadness. He attempted to get up, but was thrown back to the ground by Snape, who held him in place with a freezing spell.

"Do it." Snape spat, looking at her with dislike.

Jamie stepped forward, grinning cruelly at Dumbledore, waving her wand over her face. A white mask coalesced into existence. Behind him, the Death Eaters stirred in uproar, and Draco Malfoy looked at her with disbelief.

Raising her wand with practicing ease, she gave a small laugh, looking directly at Harry for a moment before aiming it directly toward the Headmaster.

"Avada Kedavra!"

Please Review!

Amerision

Chapter Seven: **The Flower of Narcissus**

"The Narcissist does not fall in love with his reflection because it is beautiful, but because it is his. If it were his beauty that enthralled him, he would be set free in a few years by its fading." -W.H. Auden

Jamie's eyes flashed with a certain madness as a sickly green light gathered at the tip of her wand, swirling in a mesmerizing arc of death before shooting outwards, racing across the lightning-struck tower.

Harry looked towards Albus Dumbledore, the greatest wizard of modern times, said to be the only one Lord Voldemort ever feared. He lay propped against the thick walls surrounding the towers, eyes half-open, breathing weakly.

Frustration tore through Harry like a knife. His other had joined the Dark Lord, something he'd regarded as unthinkable. Not only had she ensured her own immortality, but had also gained a source of power that would only grow with her inclusion. Harry was a lone player against an unstoppable might. With the death of Dumbledore, there would be nothing stopping the Death Eaters from conquering unopposed. Though Harry no longer cared for the Wizarding World, he knew he could never truly have Jamie as his own if she was so close to Lord Voldemort.

Harry needed help more than anything at the moment. At the very least, it would tarnish Jamie's reputation. Jumping up, Harry threw out his wand desperately, conjured a wooden block in front of the fallen Headmaster. The material swirled into existence with mere moments to spare, the roaring curse impacting it in a blazing display of light and sound. The Killing Curse disappeared with the block, its smoldering ashes swept away instantly in the fierce winds.

The Death Eaters roared with anger, brandishing their wands and looking toward his general direction; confusion fell on them as they were met with nothingness. Several curses flew toward him, dissipating against the bricks of the stairway enclosure behind him;

Harry ducked just in time, unmoving, hands gripping his wand in case someone saw through his disillusionment spell.

Snape held his hand, ceasing the barrage of deadly spells immediately. "Stop, the assailant has doubtless moved by now," he intoned slowly, "Greyback, guard the door. Draco, stay behind him. Lestrangle, secure the brooms. Yaxley, on your guard. Potter... steady your wand, don't attempt the curse again until we're alone - we can't afford any mistakes." Narrowing his eyes like he did in his detection of Jamie, Snape scanned the tower with practiced ease, seeking the slight imperfections all spells and invisibility cloaks created.

Jamie stood watching Harry, ignoring the rest of them; Harry could see the angered glint in her eyes. He supposed it was her desire to have him for herself that caused her to remain silent. Behind her, Harry watched with slight satisfaction as Dumbledore's hands disappeared into his cloak, returning with a tiny vial of pearly liquid.

Phoenix Tears...

Harry's attention was drawn back to Snape as he made a triumphant sound. With a flick of his wand, the disillusionment charm dropped, the unwelcome warmth dribbling down from his head. The Potions Professor's mouth opened a bit in surprise at his appearance, no doubt shocked at his likeness to James Potter; his wit returned quickly, however, and he managed to send off a purple beam of light.

Dodging, Harry ran for the brooms, sending several nasty curses at Lestrangle in order to distract him. The man neatly sidestepped them and hit him with something squarely in the legs, sending him tumbling to the wet floor. His body came to a stop right next to the large blonde.

The Death Eater looked down at him with a sadistic grin before bringing up his massive foot, aiming for his head. Harry rolled away and ducked under a cross of several other beams of light, barely avoiding another of the strange curses from Snape. Looking back, Harry saw several claw like gashes set in the stone he had just leapt from.

Snape and the large Death Eater were playing a vicious game against him, each taking turns to catch him. Lestrangle and Greyback

blocked his only methods of escaping, refraining from entering the fight with occasional exceptions. Jamie did nothing as he struggled, simply following Harry's progress with amused eyes, taking in his humiliation.

Harry's heart pounded in panic, and he moved with pure instinct, mind bent only on survival. No matter what he did, the lanky haired Potions master seemed to anticipate, casting the counter-curse before his own curse had even appeared. He dueled the two desperately, feeling a slight jab of frustration at his lack of progress before realizing Legilimency was at play. Using the older man's own methods, he shut out the foreign tendrils of thought, paying for his momentary lapse in attention with a weak, patronizing curse from Lestrage.

As if in a dream, a certain book ran through his mind, forever imprinted in his memories. An image of Dawlish on the ground, grunting and screaming through the pain of Harry's power sang through his consciousness, an idle suggestion.

Hissing as the searing red light burnt his leg, Harry managed to catch Yaxley with a roaring streak of brown magic, making him kneel to the ground, coughing. He let out a bloodcurdling sound as he looked at the black liquid dribbling out of his mouth, desperately wiping it away, overwhelmed as it leaked from his eyes like tears, from his ears and nose as well. Harry banished him at Snape, who calmly redirected the dying man with a banishing charm, throwing him ruthlessly off the battlements with a jab of his wand.

Snape watched him without emotion, studying him as he then conjured several large snakes to surround him, coiling them around Harry hungrily, their tongues flickering against his ear. They squeezed mercilessly, trapping his hands against his sides, preparing to bite -

Something burned in his blood, and he looked at Snape with a victorious leer, hissing to the scaled creatures around him. "*Attack him!*"

Snape froze in shock as the creatures bent to Harry's will, uncoiling almost apologetically, and barely managed to vanish the large cobras

before they struck him. Behind him, Jamie looked on with renewed interest, smirking in what seemed to be condescending approval. Any anger that would have resulted was quickly forgotten as Greyback tackled him from behind, pinning him to the large stone floor.

The werewolf moved his head forward, and up close, Harry could still see bits of flesh hanging from his sharpened teeth, a torn piece of robe trapped between fangs. His rancid breath filled Harry's nostrils as he breathed, words flowing from his mouth between animalistic snarls. "Got you at last, little boy... " He laughed slightly before opening his blood stained jaws, making to bite him.

Harry wedged his wand up under him as the werewolf lunged, shouted an incantation. Greyback was thrown off of him, landing a few meters backwards, back arched as he roared in pain, clawing at his own stomach with a strange fervor.

His dark smile of satisfaction lasted seconds, disappearing just as Harry moved to confront Snape again, when he saw the Killing Curse rush at him from the participant he had largely ignored - Rodolphus Lestranger.

It was too late, he knew, but he put up his arms over his face in a futile gesture. Excruciating pain hit him moments later, the rushing sound of Death singing in his ears, eyes blinded by bright green; Harry couldn't think at all, overwhelmed by the rush of sensations from his senses. In his delirium, he faintly recognized a scarcely noticeable swell of emotion from the link to his other.

It seemed to tear at him, tugging at his soul, wrenching him apart from the mortal world. But something seemed to interfere, and in the deepest recesses of his mind, he could hear a monotone of words being spoken, a recitation of the prophecy, ensuring that his end could only be brought about by a Tom Marvolo Riddle, a being existing in this universe as well as his own.

Just as soon as it had come, the vicious magic retreated, racing back across to its caster. Rodolphus Lestranger's eyes widened as the Killing Curse slammed into him. Green light appeared from his back as he seemed to be torn apart, splitting into a cloud of black

nothingness and vanishing into thin air as his wand clattered uselessly to the floor.

Harry reeled backwards weakly, gripping the edge of the tower to support himself. Across him, Snape looked at him with undisguised horror and amazement, hand gripping his wand tightly. Nearby, Greyback screamed in pain as he continued to disembowel himself.

Coming to his senses, Snape barked an order to a disoriented looking Jamie, one that was lost to Harry due to the ringing in his ears. Gathering herself, she looked at the Death Eater resentfully for a moment before grabbing one of the remaining brooms. Giving Harry a strange look, she swept the tower once more before stiffening, eyes glued behind Snape; clutching the broom, she dropped off the tower with a running start, disappearing rapidly in the unyielding rain.

Snape didn't see the alarm on her face, and raised his wand, bearing it down on the weakened figure across him. Before he could complete his spell, however, a flash of white light pierced through him, encasing him in a slim tower of energy. The dark haired man threw his head upward in a soundless scream as his limbs seemed to trickle away, streaks of light racing around him before he disappeared completely, gone in a flash of sparkling magic.

Albus Dumbledore rose shakily to his feet behind him, eyes cold. For a moment, Harry was afraid the looming figure would use the same strange magic on him. His fears remained unfounded, however, as his wand disappeared into his sleeve.

The flash burning anger that seemed to have consumed him melted away as his gaze fell onto Harry, a look of hope softening the harsh lines of his face. Almost impossibly, the man smiled, helping him to his feet.

Harry didn't bother withholding his own smile.

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Dumbledore sat himself behind his desk, gesturing Harry forward; a wave of the man's wand brought a comfortable looking Chintz armchair into existence behind him. Alongside him stood Fawkes'

slender perch, on which sat a mound of ashes. An unsightly chick poked its head out and squeaked weakly. The sound seemed to lack the powerful qualities of a fully grown Phoenix.

"Please sit, my boy... We have much to discuss." Harry did so, looking at the man expectantly. He tried his best not to see the man in front of him as the Dumbledore he remembered from his own world, but it proved difficult - the Headmaster folded his hands the exact same way, eyes twinkling madly like they did before Harry had fallen from his good graces; all in all, the counterpart behaved in almost the exact same manner.

"Before we begin, I must say that I cannot express my gratitude for your actions today. The heroism and bravery you have shown is simply beyond belief..." He tipped his head slightly before continuing. "I daresay you might even have a life debt over me."

Harry's thoughts raced with the possibilities. If he could position himself correctly, it would ensure that Dumbledore would never oppose him. At worst, the man could do him no harm.

Dumbledore's smooth voice shook him from his reverie as he continued. "At the risk of sounding ungrateful, however, I profess I have a few questions for you, first and foremost of which would be your name and how you arrived here. You are not a student of Hogwarts, though you resemble certain pupils I have taught myself in years past."

Harry knew he wouldn't be able to hide his ancestry from the Headmaster. He saw through illusions effortlessly and doubtless remembered clearly Jamie's parents.

"Harry Potter, sir," he answered quietly. Harry paused slightly before he finished. "I was passing by Hogsmeade when I saw the Death Eaters. I did not attend any institution, though I am of age." It was a blatant lie.

"*Potter?*" Dumbledore echoed faintly, though Harry knew he had merely confirmed his suspicions; if his appearance wasn't clue enough, there also was the fact that he looked undeniably similar to the only other person to survive the Killing Curse in this universe. The

vast holes and implausibilities of his story, such as how he had arrived on the tower itself seemed to have been ignored; Harry had made it quite clear he wasn't going to divulge anything. Harry supposed Dumbledore was simply thankful for his presence.

After a brief pause, the older wizard spoke again, this time with a sad smile. "It seems, contrary to what I had initially suspected, that the ability to survive the Killing Curse runs in your family." He looked toward a small picture on his desk before speaking again. "I am sure you know of the other individual who has done the same." With this, Dumbledore's smile faded, and his eyes fell to his desk.

"The Girl-Who-Lived." Harry said simply, and he couldn't help the tinge of fury and longing in his voice.

The ancient wizard in front of him looked up and studied him for a few moments before speaking, this time more to himself. "The similarities between you two appear to be endless, physically at least... If I didn't know any better, I'd have said Lily and James had another child. Tell me, Harry Potter, how are you related to Ms. Jamie Potter?"

Harry kept silent for a few moments. He hadn't anticipated this at all, though he should have; there were bound to be questions.

"I believe... Though, I can't be sure of course, I wasn't raised a Potter... I am a distant relative of James Potter, the father of... well, *her*." Dumbledore didn't at all question the venom in his voice. Indeed, he seemed to share his sentiment, thought it consisted more of disappointment than hate. He nodded somewhat to his answer, scribbling something Harry couldn't quite make out on a parchment in front of him.

An awkward silence then took hold of the room, with Dumbledore apparently deep in thought. He decided to push forward, wondering what action, if any, was going to be taken against his counterpart. His goal was far more attainable if the Order of the Phoenix became involved.

"Sir, I don't mean to pry, but what happened can't exactly be... Well, good - If the Girl-Who-Lived is known to be a Death Eater, Lord V - "and Harry caught himself, adding a shiver for the effect, "You-Know-

Who destroys the hope the public has. I mean, people look up to her!" He *hated* saying those words, but he imagined Tom Riddle doing the same, and Jamie after him. They played people like instruments, twisting words and guiding thoughts to their benefit. Harry wasn't to be outdone.

Dumbledore's eyes darkened slightly, and he looked behind Harry, into the faint orange glow of the fireplace lighting the room. Harry felt a slight wind run through the room, raising the hair on his neck as it rushed down from the chimney, ushering in the death of the dying flame. The shadows lengthened in the diminishing light, twisting behind them in a strange, disconcerting manner.

Dumbledore didn't seem to notice at all, lost in thought. Harry had never seen the man lose his composure like this before, and it occurred to him how much of a personal blow Jamie's betrayal was. After some time, the Headmaster continued, speaking slower, in an aged and burdened voice.

"Indeed, Mr. Potter, an insightful observation, and, unfortunately correct. This is the precise reason I will be asking you to stay quiet about what you have seen tonight on the slight chance Lord Voldemort decides to delay his newest recruit. And a recruit she must be, for she does not bear the Dark Mark. It is not uncommon for Death Eaters to be assigned a prerequisite for initiation."

Harry leaned forward, eager; something raged in his mind, bolstered on by the powerful reception his prodding had gotten. "Is that all? But what if we could take her back? Couldn't we somehow capture her?"

Dumbledore looked at him strangely, the charged, harrowing atmosphere suddenly swept away by an cold moment of awkwardness. Harry then realized why - here he was, a total unknown stepping into his office, asking to kidnap a Death Eater. He had already started treating their relationship, or lack thereof, as the one he had held with his own Dumbledore. This Headmaster knew nothing of him, and assumed him ignorant of the Order.

Nevertheless, the man seemed to humor him, though he appeared far more cautious with his words, admonishing him like a child. "A step ahead of yourself, Mr. Potter? I'm afraid '...We...' are unable to

carry out such an act. I am but a Headmaster to Hogwarts. And you are but one person. This is not to be taken lightly. Not only is *Ms. Potter* an extremely capable witch, but she is also undoubtedly under the direct protection of Lord Voldemort."

Harry bristled with the polite rebuttal, and suddenly realized how privy he had been in his own existence. He made to open his mouth, but was interrupted by Dumbledore.

"Don't concern yourself with these matters, Mr. Potter. I certainly understand your desire to help family, but this is not a task you can carry out alone. Perhaps, one day, maybe soon, you shall be able to find those who share your inclinations." He said cryptically, and Harry faintly understood he meant the Order of the Phoenix; despite the implications, however, Harry had found himself dwelling on another word.

Family.

If he was to be honest with himself, Jamie was indeed the closest thing to it; Harry, however, had never thought of her that way. He had always believed her something far closer, something more intimate than family could ever be. Yet, Dumbledore was correct. They were both of the same blood, of the same family, sharing a likeness of flesh and blood no one else could claim. Nevertheless, Harry knew he was beyond the point of caring. The trivial taboos of society hardly mattered to him anymore.

"Of course, Professor Dumbledore. I shall be waiting." He said abruptly, swallowing his pride, and stood, suddenly wishing to be anywhere but in front of the piercing gaze of the wizard before him. Dumbledore merely smiled, and stood with him, extending his undamaged hand. Harry grabbed it and shook it lightly.

"I assume you can let yourself out?" The Headmaster asked before he turned. Harry stilled, recognizing his error. There was no point in denying it – he had indicated his knowledge of the castle, something even third years often didn't fully grasp.

He smiled stiffly, nodding somewhat. "Of course."

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Harry didn't at all plan to leave Hogwarts until he had visited the dungeons.

The last surviving Death Eater was there somewhere, stored in a cell until the Aurors came the following morning to take him into custody. Harry needed information, anything at all that could help him locate his other, perhaps even the place the Death Eaters had planned to escape to. Jamie would be the only one there.

The gargoyle shutting behind him, Harry made his way to the crowded stairwells, filled with panicking students scrambling to find friends, family, or their own common rooms. Harry weaved through the mass of people, and arrived on the first floor.

He threw a quick, apathetic look at the various bodies lining the floors of the nearby Great Hall, most of them covered in blood, others missing limbs. Crying figures surrounded them, lamenting the loss of life, the extinguished breath their loved ones had once carried.

Harry found himself wondering if the same event had happened in his own world. It certainly seemed likely, as many of the events were mirrored across both universes. Harry suspected it was Theodore Nott who had carried out the plan. He remembered the strange manner in which he held himself as well as the large amounts of time Harry saw him spend in the Room of Requirement. Doubtless it had been a success as well; Nott was far more intelligent than Malfoy would ever be.

Descending into the dungeons, Harry immediately extinguished the torches behind him, discouraging anyone from entering. He needed a fair bit of privacy. A *lumos* charm to illuminate his surroundings revealed the bare walls and large, heavy wooden doors of the lower levels. Briefly looking into the Potions classroom, he saw the empty desk, the lack of the usual decorations the jovial man had placed around the normally bleak room. Slughorn was gone and apparently didn't plan on returning.

He moved on, opening the various doors in the virtual labyrinth of hallways, most of them used as storage for potions supplies. He

caught sight of chains in many of them, bringing to mind the widely ridiculed claims by Filch that hanging by toenails, lashes, and short term imprisonment were common punishments in the school's past.

Hours seemed to pass before Harry relented, having found himself walking an endless maze of corridors and rooms he'd already visited. He had already gotten amused looks from the portraits present, and more than a few giggles and laughs from the stranger ones. A drawn out cackle from the portrait of an emaciated witch made him spin around in anger.

"Quiet, you hag!" Harry muttered irritably as he moved toward the sound, scowling face close to the animated painting. The figure ignored him completely and proceeded to ridicule him further. Harry tapped his wand on the body of the witch and muttered a spell. With a howl, she was sent crashing into the large bookcase behind her, throwing books and large tomes all over the depicted room.

Harry turned and began to walk away, paying no attention to the curses spat in his direction as she scrambled out of the avalanche of drawn books, threatening various painful endings to his life. He saw in the corner of his eye the witch following him through the adjacent portraits, continuing her tirade, waking the sleepy looking figures around her.

The racket she was making was causing commotion in the previously quiet hallway, the occupants of the portraits all clamoring to see the cause of the disruption. Harry knew he couldn't afford the trouble; if the portraits alerted their counterparts in the Headmaster's office, he'd be forced to answer more questions he didn't feel comfortable answering.

Casting another silencing charm behind him to mask the sound, he walked back to the current painting the witch was occupying, a victorious smirk on her face. She had dark hair, a thin, pale face with a deathly pallor, skin drawn around her bones. It was clear she must have looked pretty in her day, but the artist seemed to have captured her in a degenerate state, wasted away.

"What to do you want?" Harry asked with thinly veiled dislike in his voice. He hated being bested, but he didn't have time to deal with

trivialities. The woman pushed a bumbling old man out of his own armchair and sat herself in it, striking her legs and placing her hand under chin, clearly enjoying the attention.

"I want? I want I want I want..." She trailed off, leaning back, eyes closed as she lifted her shoulders, breathing in. Her eyes opened moments later, and she frowned, inky black eyes narrowing. "I want many things, but before I tell you, I want to see your face. Clearly now, I don't just divulge my desires with just anyone..."

Indulging her, Harry moved closer, pointing his wand light at himself in exasperation. The woman made a humming sound and stopped her gaze on his scar. She hopped nimbly off her chair, long cloak pulling behind her on the ground, and moved to the canvas, trying to get a better look.

"A scar, perhaps... *Are you not the Potter with the serpent's gift?*" She breathed, eyes wide and eager, suddenly glowing with life. Her tongue flicked absently, and proceeded to lick her lips; Harry almost missed the fact she had slipped into Parseltongue. "*I had heard you were female...but then, my compatriots here are doddering fools, weak minded creatures bent after centuries of boredom... such is the curse of being a confined portrait.*"

She paused briefly, shifting the overlarge cloak hugging her painfully thin body. Harry caught a glimpse of something shiny within the large folds of fabric. As if composing herself, the witch again spoke, long, winding hisses emanating from deep within her throat.

"*Tell me, young Potter, how did you come into possession of the abilities belonging to my ancestor? The Potters never liked us much enough to mingle in my day, but of course, that was another time... I suppose things have changed.*"

Harry afforded her a cursory nod of agreement, not wanting to lie directly; some portraits were eerily capable of magic themselves. In their quest to determine if Harry was a descendent of Slytherin in their second year, he, Hermione and Ron had gone through the few scattered books on genealogy available in the library. While the records had been far from complete, there was clearly a time where

many Slytherin family members existed, thus strengthening the lie that perhaps Harry was one himself.

Caution was still prudent, however: Of the numerous wizards and witches in that line, many of them had been accomplished in life, making it more than likely that a few had taken this attribute to their own portraits in death.

“Now... I am sorely lacking in company. An addition to my painting would do nicely. In return, I’ll provide you with the assistance you require. Do remember that you cannot insert another person in a portrait easily; however it is possible to use an animal... You know which we both prefer. Use a painting charm and give the snake substance. I shall animate him myself.”

Harry pressed his wand to the canvas warily and muttered a spell, a hissing liquid gently flowing from its tip; with a slight twist of his wrist, he drew the body of the serpent around the witch, who watched with a detached pleasure. Finished, Harry pocketed his wand once more, observing.

The shining ink melted into the painting itself, sinking into the original design. The witch’s demeanor slowly became mellow, almost gentle; she sunk to her knees as she tenderly touched the blunt, alien looking shape below her. With a stroke of her hands, the substance seemed to refine into the likeness of a properly drawn snake, its features sharpening under her tender touch. The figure twitched abruptly to life and hissed, a wordless, pitiful animalistic sound filling the air. Sighing like a mother fussing over her child, the sullen woman then pulled the slack creature around her shoulders, whispering to it quietly.

Harry’s anger had disappeared with the incredible show of magic, and he stood with wonder, watching quietly as the witch sat for a few moments with her newest companion. It seemed an eternity before she stood again, a glint of sanity seemingly restored in her.

“Come, my dear cousin; I shall show you the path you seek.”

Harry didn’t bother to question how she knew.

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Harry followed the witch through the many hallways, keeping his eyes not on the walls and doors before him as he had before, but on the portraits themselves. Though the path they followed was the same Harry himself had explored, Harry noticed extra rooms and openings in the corner of his eyes, doubtless a result of a notice-me-not charm that could only be circumvented by a portrait guide.

"The Headmasters use me as a key to these various chambers," The witch said quietly. "Of course, I ignore all of them. The only one I ever pay attention to is Phineas Nigellus Black, who comes here on Dumbledore's behalf. I listen to him because he's the only Slytherin Headmaster who is coherent enough to still peruse the school."

She stopped her journey in an empty portrait, one looking quite like her first one, which hung between two doors. She took the key Harry had seen earlier in her robes and placed it in a painted keyhole in the spine of a book in the bookcase behind her. The book disappeared along with the key, and the witch quickly moved out of the portrait and into another as it swung back to reveal a small cell bathed in shadows, lit by a single candle on a table.

"When you are finished, simply tap the portrait with your wand," she said, "You have all night." Making to leave, she looked at Harry one final time, petting the snake curled around her neck. *"Good luck, and do return someday."* With that, she disappeared.

Harry watched her go for a moment, and stepped in, the painting swinging to a close behind him. In the distant corner, huddled in the relative cold was Draco Malfoy, staring at him in fear. Harry relished in his expression, and reached deep in his robes for the journal the boy's counterpart had given him back in his own world.

"Who are you?" The blonde boy demanded, though his voice wavered. He had jumped to his feet, tense and ready to move, eyes locked on Harry's wand.

"It's really none of your concern, and most definitely the least of your worries." Harry replied dismissively. It was a pity he didn't have any Veritaserum, but he doubted Slughorn would have left any of the

Ministry controlled substance lying around; Harry didn't have any time to brew it before sunrise, either. It wasn't too much of a setback, however. There were other ways of getting a person to talk.

Binding Malfoy, Harry opened *Magicus* again, and flipped the pages until he reached the section on experimental curses., eyeing a section on magical markings. He eyed the boy's dark mark with interest. "I want you to tell me everything you know about Jamie Potter, including where she went on the broom."

Malfoy stared at him for a few moments before laughing, looking at him incredulously. "Potter? All this for Potter? And here I thought you were trying to find the Death Eaters. Well I'm afraid she's already taken..."

Harry's eyes narrowed and he stepped closer. He was put off by the confidence the boy had displayed. Harry supposed Greyback must have sent him away, and did not recognize his face from the recent duel; Harry knew Malfoy at heart was never this brazen, and feared those who were truly capable of power.

"By who, may I ask?" He asked dangerously, and he found himself shaking with outrage, hatred, *disbelief* at the fact that Jamie had taken another.

Malfoy sneered, and it seemed he had regained his usual arrogance. "Why, you're looking at him! After my father gets me out of this mess, we'll be signing the papers with the old Longbottom bat." He delighted in Harry's darkening expression, flashing him the same childish smirk he made when insulting Harry's heritage. "I'll unite two of the wealthiest families around, and Malfoy will be on top of it all! What could *you* possibly offer?"

His jaw clenched, Harry swallowed against the tightness in his throat, forcing himself to ignore the insults and fight against the rising sea of red that threatened to overtake him. Composing himself, he raised his wand once more, rolling the boy over on his back.

"What could I offer?" Harry asked quietly. He moved forward to look down at Malfoy, placing the book beside him, pages open to the

serpentine words promising thrill and revenge. “You forget who has a wand. Soon I’ll be asking *you* that question.”

Myself a Fool

the perfect companion savors your face in full as you stand in awe in front of

that luminous, tall mirror...

You feel so strongly for the image it's hard to breathe...

there can't be anyone better, anyone you can imagine more powerful and beautiful ...

you can hate, and you can hurt, but 'till death do you part,

you loved the only thing that loved you back

Harry awoke in a tangle of damp sheets, skin soaked with beads of sweat.

The feeble rays of the sun remained hidden away behind the pair of threadbare curtains he had pulled across the dirty windows. Dim light from the cloudy afternoon filtered in through the fringes, throwing long, sinister shadows across the shabby room he had rented.

Pulling aside the musty smelling linens, Harry moved off the large, two-person bed and stood, grabbing his wand from the stand.

He had thought he would be safe in this world, free from the constraints of his old life and able to pursue his own agenda. It should have been a world free of Voldemort's constant looming threat, a world where he could define himself, to achieve his desires without limits.

His revenge should have been sweet, simple, and above all, successful. Instead he was involved in another tiring game of cat and mouse with his other, twisting and slipping through a new set of people so much like his own.

Harry glanced at the opened letter he had received the night before, delivered to him by a stern old owl he recognized from the owlry at Hogwarts. The loopy writing was instantly recognizable on the smooth, creamy white parchment, the baroque crest of Hogwarts emblazoned across the upper left corner.

--

Mr. Harry Potter,

I must first welcome you to a most humble community. Hogsmeade is a wonderful town to live in, and I am sure you will find yourself quite comfortable with the quaint way of life the citizens here enjoy.

Pleasantries aside, I write to you on behalf of an organization that seeks new members. In our discussion several days ago you displayed a certain will to resist the darker happenings that are sweeping through England. I recommended you as a strong candidate, and relayed to them your proficiency in magic.

They are very eager to meet you.

A word of caution, however; the work this group engages in is very dangerous. It is the actions of old men that bring about wars, but it is unfortunately the young that ultimately pay the price. Normally I would not think of introducing you to this order, but I am not so much of a fool to believe that a simple warning will deter you from taking action. It is much safer and effective for you to partake in this movement with others rather than alone.

With that said, I must also make mention of your errant cousin. Although I have suppressed any word of suspicion implicating her in last week's attack, I felt it was important for Mrs. Longbottom to know the truth.

As you must know, she cared for Ms. Potter following the deaths of Lily Potter's muggle relatives. She was very close to James' family and wishes to meet you as soon as possible.

I must warn you that she is somewhat skeptical of Ms. Potter's allegiance, believing her to be misguided rather than corrupted.

Indulge her as you may – though she may not show it in her mostly unsentimental demeanor, her life has been difficult since losing her son, daughter in law, and only grandchild to such terrible ends.

Albus Dumbledore

Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

--

Harry had sent off a short note of acknowledgment and interest to Dumbledore the day before, using a neighbor's owl. He had neglected to bring Hedwig along, but he was sure the regal bird would not have survived the passage through the mirror. He had only survived because of the prophecy, his life essential to the completion of his destiny.

He absently wondered if Hedwig would respond to him in this new world, or if she existed at all.

Harry recalled Jamie speaking of her, his memory straining as he thought back to a time he wasn't consumed by hate, fear of capture, and the weight of responsibility for his own actions.

It seemed a different era entirely one where no amount of exclusion or marginalization could ever dampen him. It was a blissful month or two his life had been defined by time until midnight, when he could don his invisibility cloak and roam into the welcoming darkness of the third floor, turning his back on everyone but himself.

His mind inevitably spiraled away to images of warm embraces and even warmer kisses, of furious touch and quiet murmurs. He never could get enough of her smooth skin, her luminous black hair running through his fingers like liquid night, and soulful, familiar emerald eyes that never needed explanation or excuse.

The thought of her taking another was almost crushing, so inherently *wrong* that it made his jaw clench, fists curl and eyes burn with fury.

Why Draco Malfoy?

Harry couldn't think of her ever expressing any sort of interest with another student, let alone Malfoy. He supposed she was pragmatic, that she was naturally choosing the crème of the social and economic crop.

Jamie was ambitious in a way that surpassed even Harry in his first year, when he had dreams of becoming a great wizard, to learn all he could of this frightening power. He had no illusions of friendship then, no false feelings of companionship and fulfillment of the yearning he felt for being part of a community.

Harry knew this difference between them stemmed from the mere fact Jamie was a female. While he had met Ron and had gone on to lavish in the attention, Jamie had probably never found Ron to be engaging.

She never had a reason to protest the hat's quiet whisper in her mind, suggesting lightly that she could be something great in the Serpent house.

Harry wondered idly the kind life she had endured. Where he had made friends, no matter how disappointing they were in that regard, Jamie had been plunged in a group filled with rivalry, strife, and hatred, a practiced policy of stepping on those of impure blood.

And she seemed to have grown from it, taking it within her and learning all her unwelcome housemates had to offer. Harry knew she had drew herself into her studies as a way of raising her status among her peers. By the time she had met Harry, his other had been able to crush any talk of her half-blood birth with merciless force.

Pansy Parkinson's long, noble line of pureblooded family members meant nothing in the face of a hostile wand, an eleven and a half inch phoenix feather core that had broken bones, torn flesh, and thought to have plunged four lives into the cold embrace of death.

Power was the ultimate currency in life, and Jamie Haile Potter had plenty to spare.

He looked at his own wand, wondering if he stood a chance at defeating her in a duel. He had improved his skills in casting and

control in the several months since their last meeting, and had learned some useful magic from his studies. At the very least he felt he could fight her to a stalemate, despite the the air of superiority she exuded.

And if he were to beat her, what then? He already knew he couldn't kill her. He could no more murder her than murder himself. He had come to triumph. Her death would be a short-lived, unsatisfying one.

He knew what he wanted most in life was to hold power over her in the same way she had done to him. Harry wanted his hand around her life, fingers pressing hard against her as he could take what he wish. He wanted to see her defiance beaten down, her will expressed and then denied, time after time. She was to be his in every way of the word.

It was only in this he would succeed, not only in desire but also but over himself.

Harry appeared neatly on the doorstep of Longbottom Manor, the sharp crack of his arrival echoing out among the vast fields of grain around them. The summer air was sweet and thick, the dim warmth of the sun shining down on his straight, composed figure.

He was determined to make a proper impression. Smoothing out the fine set of robes he had stolen just for the occasion, he stepped back slightly behind the awning and looked at the house.

It was an aging, ornate structure, with a lavish, faded design that suggested an extravagance of times past. There were several unkempt sheds sitting on the sides of the manor, weeds poking through the holed sides.

Surrounded by the endless, untarnished land, the residence was very pleasant overall, giving a sense of tranquil isolation that could put even the most twisted mind at ease. Or hide it.

Stepping back up to the front of the house, Harry looked for any sort of doorbell, magical or otherwise. A small, shining gold fixture on the door seemed to serve the role of a knocker, yet had no visible

knocking piece. It was a lifelike leaf spread open, protruding slightly from the surface.

Harry studied it for a moment before tapping his wand on the leaf three times. The veins of the leaf glowed bright white for a moment before promptly dissipating, resulting in three deep thumps from deep within the house.

Several moments passed before the door opened, revealed an austere, older woman of impressive height. Her face was sharp, marred with premature lines and a seemingly perpetual frown. Dark, narrowed blue eyes stared at him with vague interest, mouth set harshly.

She looked less imposing without her vulture hat, but retained all the authority and poise he remembered her having in the brief glimpses he had seen of her at King's Crossing. In her hand she clutched a longish wand of curious design.

"You must be Harry." She said bluntly, not a hint of question in her voice as she stared hard at him, searching for something. As if he passed some sort of test, she stepped back moments later and widened the doorway. "Come in, Mr. Potter."

Harry obliged, stepping into the welcome, deeply shaded cool of the pristine household. The furnishing were of impressive quality, but simple in form. There was a sense of order in the sparse, equally spaced portraits, the symmetric quality of the rooms, and the excessively clean chairs and tables throughout the manor. The house seemed to mirror the Longbottom matriarch's dominating personality.

A polite cough shook him from his observations. Harry turned to see Longbottom standing by the staircase, observing him shrewdly with her hands clasped on the elaborate end of the railing. "Albus tells me you're a relative of James', a distant cousin that's been living under our noses for quite some time. Of course, I profess having a healthy bit of doubt at that."

The sound of pecking at a window made the woman stop. She excused herself and moved to an open, well-lit lounge nearby,

drawing back the curtains to reveal a snowy white owl sitting patiently on the sill.

Harry stared in surprise as what could only be Hedwig flew in as the window opened, settling itself on Longbottom's arm. It hooted in annoyance, waiting impatiently until the note it was carrying was removed.

Seeing Harry's look, Longbottom scowled slightly. "I tried to get my daughter's owl to find her. The parchment is spelled to keep track of its own location at all times. The damned creature refuses to do it, though. I just *know* it. I should get rid of it. It flies around London, is all, and never actually lands anywhere."

Harry saw a glimpse of long, spidery text before she threw it on a nearby table with disgust, shaking the owl off her arm. Hedwig screeched angrily and flew toward Harry, eying him oddly before settling itself on a perch off to the right.

A mousy house elf appeared and quickly retrieved the fallen parchment, placing it in a small pouch around its waist. Longbottom apparently noticed, as she addressed it with a scornful look, unleashing her annoyance at the owl: "Babbidge, bring us some tea! I want it dark and slightly sweet. Do it quickly!"

The small elf bowed, its wrinkled head touching the floor before disappearing.

Muttering under her breath, Longbottom settling herself in an uncomfortable looking chair. Harry took this as an invitation to sit down as well, noting all the others' chairs were smaller and lower to the ground, clearly of lower quality than the first. She had deemed to choose his beverage for him. A slight swell of annoyance shot through Harry as he realized the older woman establishing herself as the dominating force of their little, unsaid conflict.

Picking something unseen from her characteristic long green dress, Longbottom glared somewhat at the owl before pinning Harry with a stony look. She gathered herself and continued from before, suddenly interested. "I knew all of James' family. *All* of it. My grandmother was herself a Potter and introduced me to *every* single one of the lot. Yet,

Dumbledore assures me that you are who you claim you are. Fortunately for you, he has never been wrong before.”

Harry began to despise the woman with each passing moment, but allowed her to carry on with her prideful logic.

“Therefore,” she said after a brief pause, leaning forward, eyes gleaming with something akin to victory, “You must be of a bastard line. Am I correct in this assumption?”

Harry's jaw clenched, growing angry at the insult. He could now see traces of this woman in his other. The predatory game she played with words, her stiff, controlled posture, even the way she showed her teeth when she smiled coldly. Nevertheless, he couldn't allow himself to lose control of his temper.

“You are.” He finally grounded out with false politeness, vestiges of contained fury hanging from his words. His demeanor lightened up moments later, and he smiled slightly. “Is there a reason you wished to see me beyond the circumstances of my birth? Others had assured me that you were beyond trivial matters such as family ties and purity... After all, we all saw the pitiful path your own foster daughter took in life, and she was the product of an honorable marriage.”

Longbottom flushed pink, expression turning hawkish as she swept back the graying brown hair from her face; clutching the armrests of her chair, she leaned forward and snarled: “How *dare* you! My daughter is not one of *them*!”

Behind them, Hedwig screeched, making Longbottom growl further in anger. She drew her wand and threw a hex at the perch, forcing the squawking owl off the perch, making Harry's fingers twitch.

“I saw her with my own eyes, Ms. Longbottom,” and here he showed his teeth somewhat, mimicking her. “Your daughter is a Death Eater. She's a vicious, lying, manipulative criminal, and nothing more.”

His nonchalant manner seemed to anger her more, making her shake in outrage. Harry noted absently the slight, faint spark emanating from the tip of her wand.

“You know *nothing!* I fought dark wizards before you were even born! I know her better than anyone else in this world, and I won't have a low *bastard* like you to tell me otherwise!”

Harry brushed off the hysteria, maintaining the infuriating civility. “All those years gone to waste! You thought you could make up for poor Neville's death, didn't you? You failed in your duty to your son, but also to something greater – to produce a suitable child to carry on your family and what it stands for. Neville was a pathetic loser, nothing like his father. You were glad to see him go, weren't you? ”

“How *dare* you even insinuate such a *preposterous* - ” she started quietly, face purpling, before being interrupted.

“ And yet you rejoiced when Dumbledore asked for you to take in the *Girl-Who Lived*. You thought maybe you could make something out of this dying family after all, replace the tarnish of cowardice and ineptness that's been haunting your surname for generations now with something golden. This was your chance to erase all the disgrace your line has brought upon you!” Harry's voice was growing now, and he seemed to loom over the enraged woman.

“*Lies!*” Longbottom screeched, and she seemed ready to strangle Harry, anything to silence him. Harry ignored her, and began to grin in triumph.

“I bet you didn't even shed a tear for *poor, stupid* Neville. You had money to take from a large trust fund, the ability to live comfortably since everyone started dying around you, and yet another chance at success. But here you are now, deluded and alone. Your third child, last in a long list of *failures*, is now a Death Eater...”

The older woman's face morphed into that of a crazed animal, and she jumped off her chair with surprising agility. “*Expello Viscuten!*” she screeched, her elaborately carved wand producing a swell of dark violet smoke. A skeletal, hand-like plume seemed to reach out of the small cloud, the long, thin fingers stretching out eagerly.

Harry had fully expected this, but was strangely sat frozen as the sinister hand shot for his chest, almost mesmerized by the slow

moving, twinkling dark smoke. The light in the room seemed to fade away, everything blurring as a lull seemed to grip his mind.

But as the putrid claws of the curse brushed his robes, Harry struggled free, eyes flashing fiercely as he stood suddenly, pushing the chair behind him back and plunging his wand into the menacing magic. With a twist of his wrist, he broke the spell and cleared the oily darkness, a light screeching noise emanating in his ears. The room snapped back to normal.

Harry stepped through the clearing smoke and appeared before a panting Augusta Longbottom, waving his wand and sending her crashing into the brick wall surrounding the fireplace behind her. He casually kicked her wand into the fire.

"An entrail expelling charm? I've never seen one so...hands on," Harry remarked, heart pounding in his ears, only a hint of a terrifying smile on his face as he keeled down in front of his adversary. He grabbed her throat and slammed her into the wall behind her, removing any fight left in the woman.

As she fell back, defeated, Harry clutched her greying, brown hair and forced her to look at the blazing fire, where her opulent ivory wand was burning away. The instrument of magic gave off a sad flare before being engulfed completely, the flames turning a sharp, baleful green. Her eyes burned at the proximity, face pressed against the rough, soot laden brick.

"What do you want?" she hissed fearfully, eying the crackling fire before her face. "You come to my house and insult my family, my children, and my adopted daughter. *Why?* Money? Is that what you wish? I took some, but you can have it all. Is that why you're here?"

Heart pounding in his head, he was about to respond before the slight pop of a house elf sounded behind him. He whipped around to see the elf from before, a large kitchen knife in hand. It made an unintelligible sound of fury before running, launching itself at him.

His other hand still crushing Longbottom against the brick wall, he turned slightly, extending his wand out, releasing a torrent of dark power.

"Avada Kedavra!" he snarled, the holly wand trembling as it unleashed the devastating curse. The green burst of light roared through the air, catching the house elf in its midsection. It didn't make a sound as it was thrown backwards in midair, dropping the knife and crashing into the cabinet behind him. A waterfall of glass and china fell on its body, impaling the soulless corpse.

Satisfied, Harry turned to the broken, terrified looking woman before him. It was a far cry from the outspoken, bold lady from before. "Yes, I think I'll take some money. Who has the key to the Potter vault?"

"Jamie took it with her. I don't have it," she croaked, unable to meet his eyes. Harry didn't need to use legilimency to see through the lie.

Harry wordlessly turned back to the corpse of the elf and summoned it. He grabbed it by its neck and ripped off the pouch, pressing its face in front of its former master. She let off a gasp at the glassy eyes, closing her own and turning her head around, unwilling to meet them.

Wand leveraged in front of her, Harry muttered a short charm, forcing her eyes open. She screamed at him in helplessness. Grinning, he pressed it against her face one last time before tossed the elf into the fire, the body landing neatly into the burning embers. It caught flame almost immediately, turning the greenish, mottled skin brown.

He forced her to watch for several seconds before turning her back to face him, releasing the charm on her eyes. Tears streamed down her face. "I'll ask you one more time. Any more, and you'll join him after I simply torture you to submission." Harry's emerald eyes flashed dangerously, pressing his smoldering wandtip roughly into her throat, burning the skin away.

"Where is the key?"

"Oh, it was a pleasure. I'm so very sorry for my elf. I don't know what got into the ungrateful thing. I can't bear to think of what would have happened if you hadn't appeared today!"

Harry smiled genuinely, bowing his head modestly. "I was only doing my duty, madame Longbottom."

“Nonsense,” the woman scoffed, smiling faintly herself. “There aren't many with that sort of courage. You remind me so much of Frank, my only son. If Jamie should ever return to me, I shall ask you to meet her. Lucius' boy would never do such a thing, the little ferret.”

Harry paused for a few moments, looking at his others' adopted mother, eyebrows furrowing.

“I...would be *delighted*,” Harry said brightly, feeling strange.

Harry appeared in a swirl of green fire, stepping through neatly for what seemed to be the first time in his life. He brushed himself off and quickly moved away in case of any new arrivals.

The regulars of the Leaky Cauldron spared him a mere glance before resuming their activities, ending the short moment of curious silence with the typical noise of quiet speech and the clattering of plates and goblets.

In the dim light, Harry saw Tom squinting at him from behind the bar, his cleaning momentarily forgotten. Suppressing the urge to greet him, Harry moved towards the back door, keeping his face away from the bald bartender as he walked between tables of warlocks and dusty wizards nursing their drinks and dreaming of youth. Pulling the faded wooden door open, he stepped into the cool summer evening without a backwards glance.

Drawing his wand, he crossed the short yard to the worn, dirty brick wall that served as the gate to the popular wizarding district. Harry paused for a moment, straining to remember the combination before tapping the bricks correctly in sequence. The bricks faithfully peeled outwards in a whirlwind of magic just as Harry remembered them doing so in his own world.

Diagon Alley seemed much the same as it always did. Yet, he was a foreigner in this universe, a stranger that did not exist. Despite it, however, his appearance was familiar to many of the wizards and witches that had gone to Hogwarts with James Potter – he had already received many odd looks and strange stares in the short week he had spent in the busy inn on the outskirts of Hogsmeade.

Bumping past the quickly moving families and newly released Hogwarts students moving together, Harry walked past the emptying shops and the terrified looking streetside salesmen. The attack on Hogwarts had left everyone tense and wary. Nobody seemed to trust each other, every unknown face a potential enemy.

Ignoring them all, Harry reached the end of the alley, bounding up the ancient white steps of Gringotts. The two goblin guards leered at him as if trying to gauge his character. Stepping past them, he entered the well-lit, golden interior of the Wizarding Bank, making his way to the relatively empty teller booths.

Retrieving a small, golden key from his robes, Harry approached the teller.

The older goblin sat behind the counter, propped up high on a stool, seemingly writing a brief report. He shifted his attention to Harry as he neared, pushing the papers to the side.

Harry placed the key in front of the goblin and leaned forward, keeping his voice even and professional.

"In my capacity as a Potter, I'd like to empty my family vault. Please place the total into a new, private account."

The goblin narrowed his eyes and picked up the key in his gnarly hands, adjusting his large glasses as he inspected it closely. He then looked up at Harry, as if judging the truth of the statement before nodding, hopping off his stool and making his way around the counter.

"Of course sir. Right this way, please," he intoned dully before setting off.

Harry followed, smiling slightly.

Please Review!

Amerision

Equal and Opposite

--

Do you know they locked up Ettisoppo? For the same reason they hid Erised. The mirrors bring madness. History is wrought with witches and wizards who have fallen to its subtle magics... from Cleopatra to Barnleby the Brave.

Their weapon is escape. This alternative to our reality, the window to another world is too dangerous for any human mind.

--

Tides of Turn

--

"The headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix may be found at Number Twelve, Grimmauld Place, London."

Harry had hardly finished the sentence before the manor sprung into existence, shoehorning itself between two muggle properties. The silent black Auror behind him motioned him inside, following his lead into the shadowy house and closing the door behind them.

Harry looked around the house as he stepped through its dimly lit hallways, avoiding the streams of unfamiliar wizards and witches who filed through the otherwise silent dwelling. He made to enter the unusually dank, grimy kitchen, but Shackbolt grabbed his arm and instead led him into the study without a word.

The study had been completely changed. Where the library used to stand had been replaced by various tables and desks, each overflowing with maps and folders. Albus Dumbledore sat in the middle of it all, quietly scribbling orders to the numerous operatives in the Order. Despite it all, Harry's arrival didn't go unnoticed. The moment he stepped in the room, Dumbledore looked up and welcomed him in, getting to his feet and shaking his hand warmly.

“Mr. Potter, welcome to the Order of the Phoenix. I trust Kingsley’s lead here was uneventful?”

Harry glanced shrewdly at the looming Auror, utterly unsurprised to see his tongueless mouth twist into a grin. “Of course.”

“Splendid,” Dumbledore intoned, returning to his desk. “I assume you have considered the peril of our work? Make no mistake; there is a very real risk of death or worse. Our enemies have no qualms at all about what they do.”

Harry barely perceived the privacy charms going into effect. Very slowly, the haggard looking people around them began to disperse. Only Shacklebolt remained behind him, a noiseless sentinel in the otherwise cordial atmosphere.

“We’ve discussed this. I only want to fulfill my duty to my sole remaining family. I will do whatever is necessary. I only need your help when I ask for it.”

Dumbledore watched him for several moments before giving Shacklebolt an unreadable look. The man grunted and left the room.

“I owe you a life debt, I haven’t forgotten. I will assist you as I can without putting this organization at undue risk.”

“That’s all I ask, Professor.”

The slip drew Dumbledore’s piercing gaze, but the older wizard didn’t comment on it. “What is it that you require, Mr. Potter? If I may be blunt, what can you do that we have not already done to find young Jamie Potter?”

--

Harry stood quietly behind the window of his small Hogsmeade house, studying the distant speck of white approach.

It only took the snow white owl a minute or two to land on his outstretched arm, ruffling itself proudly as Harry ran a hand over its head in appreciation. Untying the parchment tied to its leg, Harry

placed Hedwig on the windowsill and began reading the spidery script scrawled by magic.

“Good girl,” he murmured after finishing, watching the loyal owl fly off into the dark sky for a well-deserved rest.

The creature had followed him back to his new home, perhaps mistaking Harry for the mistress it had been deprived of for so long. The owl, sensitive to his magic, had taken to him like his own. And while it would not accept Augusta Longbottom’s demands for it to locate a daughter that preferred not to be found, it took his requests as if it were issued by its mistress herself.

Owls could not deliver to wizards who cast charms for blocking post. One’s own owl, however, relied on different means to locate their owners. The special connection between familiars and their wizards was one that could not be obscured by simple magic. But a few words were all it took to block off even this avenue – an owner’s wishes were law. But to Hedwig, Harry was no different than the quiet, dark haired girl that she had been gifted to years ago.

Harry circled a single address that Hedwig had returned to over and over again, revealing at last his other’s location. A smile pulled at his lips as he thought of the irony of it all. It seemed fitting that it would be the very things Jamie had left behind would lead to her downfall; her money, Hedwig – Harry himself.

--

Harry stepped out of a small alley in Bradford and crossed the busy street to the other side, inspecting the rather dilapidated apartment his other had secured for herself. The brick building was crumbling at the very foundation, its walls scored with the ravages of time and the surrounding area suffering in the throes of poverty.

The distant sound of sirens covered the noise of the curse that shattered the lock on the front door. Cautiously opening the door, he made his way down a dank, sparsely lit hallway. The lights flickered pitifully as he walked through, throwing various flashes onto the rug-covered walls.

A small, darker skinned child ran out of an open door and passed by his legs, not even bothering to give him a sidelong look. A young mother dressed in a headscarf bolted out of the door after her child, but stopped in her tracks at the sight of Harry dressed in his robes and carrying his wand. She began screaming out in an unfamiliar language, terror etched in her face as she began backing away. One of her hands fumbled with a small, rough looking wand.

Harry sent her crashing into a wall with a wordless curse, crushing her wand under his boot as he walked on towards the stairs. He pushed by several other youth in the stairwell, who began to shout in alarm as they saw the crumpled form on the ground.

He quickly made his way up the stairs. On the third floor landing he found himself blocked by two teenage boys around his age, one of them taller and wielding prayer beads. Their faces seemed oddly fearless and determined, as if they didn't realize what exactly they were doing. The one on Harry's left deftly passed one bead through his hand and held the object in front of him.

Harry had pressed himself against the railings just in time to see a small mote of light barely miss his face. The strange form of magic speared through the nearby wall and left a withering circle of decay around the point of impact. Harry lifted his wand in defense, only to find the second, smaller teen launching himself at him. He caught the full brunt of the tackle in his side, grunting as he was thrown down the stairs onto another landing.

He overpowered the viciously growling boy and threw him into the wall before raising a shield charm to defend himself against yet another attack from the foreign-looking wizard. He grabbed the dazed boy and broke the shield, using him as a screen for further curses. Making his way up the stairs with the limp body in tow, Harry was only vaguely surprised when the teen ruthlessly attacked anyway, passing three beads. He grunted as a curse punched through the midsection of the human shield he was using, clipping his side and drawing blood. A cold, sickly force began burning at the wound.

Back on the same landing as the wizard, Harry muttered a general countercurse at the cut and stepped back when the visibly annoyed

teen passed six beads. The force blew the gurgling boy out of his hands and over the railings, where he met the floor with a visceral crunch seconds later.

Harry jabbed his wand and cast the same entrail-expelling curse Longbottom had directed against him. The glittering, dark smoke filled the air and formed a gruesome, bony hand that reached for the teen. The wizard used the prayer beads to trap the fingers, folding it delicately and dispelling the curse. Harry used the time to launch a powerful cutting curse he hoped would cut through the magical instrument.

The teen smiled and separated two beads, baring the flimsy looking string. It glowed as it withstood the spike of magic, seemingly unbreakable. The boy answered by passing eight beads through his fingers. Harry didn't bother waiting to find the result, turning in place and disappearing. He reappeared behind the boy and grabbed the beads from his hands, throwing it around his head and slamming his face into the railing.

Blood erupted from his nose as he cried out for the first time. Harry used the distraction to loop the end of the beads around the post in the railings and shove the boy over them. He fell over and screamed as his neck was nearly snapped, clutching at the invulnerable beads that were killing him.

Harry left the scene and ran up another three flights of stairs, noting the boy's last attack had destroyed the much of the stairs below the third floor. Tenants were leaving their rooms, coming out and rapidly speaking to each other in their language. A few spotted him and shouted, their eyes taking an almost feral quality as they ran behind him.

The topmost floor was somewhat smaller than the ones below, but remained just as derelict as the others. The rug was torn, the walls with holes and the doors peeling paint. Turning back, he leveled his wand at the stairs and unleashed a blasting curse that destroyed the last twelve or thirteen steps. The tenants attempted to jump anyway, all of them falling down onto the stairway below.

Just as he was about to look for the door 631, he found himself confronted by a burly, bearded man he guessed was related to the woman he had encountered downstairs. He grunted something before running at him with a thick book in one hand and a scimitar in the other.

Harry leapt back from a swipe from the gleaming, heavy weapon and answered with a vicious concussion hex that was simply absorbed into the religious tome. The man barreled down the hallway, nearly cutting him in half as Harry desperately tried to keep his footing and fend the man off. The beastly figure shook off a heartstopping curse that would have killed any other and jabbed Harry in the chest with the butt of the scimitar.

Harry rolled away from the attack that would have taken off his head and blasted out the inside of the man's knee. The leg broke outward sharply, eliciting only a heavy breath from the man. He brought the tip of sword down against Harry on the way down, only nearly missing.

Harry stepped backwards, watching warily as the man met his eyes and laughed, pressing the open book to his knee and muttering a few words. To Harry's alarm, the leg snapped easily back in place. Another charge had Harry taking yet another hit. Ducking under another swipe, he unleashed a cutting curse and took off the sword hand at the forearm.

The man gave it only a bare look before bringing up the book once more. Harry didn't wait to see if the man could regrow his own arm, and transfigured the fallen scimitar into a viper.

"Kill him."

The massive snake wasted no time in wrapping itself around the man and biting his neck. He struggled valiantly, beating his bloody stump against the creature's head. Harry knocked the book out of his clutches, hissing as it burnt his hand.

It took only a few more seconds before the man stilled his thrashing, falling to the floor dead.

Stepping over the body, Harry walked to the middlemost door in the hallway, where someone had tore into the wood the numbers which spelled out his and his other's birthdate.

He shot only a brief look to the wild crowd of tenants trying and failing to make their way to him, undoubtedly to attack him and protect their mistress. Smoothing his robes, he opened the unlocked door and entered inside.

A sparse apartment greeted him, the rooms mostly empty except for a single chair and a table set high with various papers. A few robes had been hung from a coat rack set in the corner of the room. The topmost robe was stained with red, and dried red droplets littered the floor beneath it.

Harry pulled the robe off and examined it, seeing the small stains everywhere along the fabric. He felt vague twinges of pain all across his body, echoing what he supposed must have happened to her. Harry moved on to the sole bedroom, standing over the threadbare mattress. The blood was there as well, splotches of dried crimson against the graying yellow cover. Harry bent over to touch it, feeling the recent warmth in the fabric. He made to turn back when he found a wand against his neck, a familiar presence pressed against him from behind. A light whisper filled his ear.

"The coatrack, Harry. You should have checked."

Harry looked straight ahead, feeling the slight trembling in his other's muscles, the pain in her labored breaths, the sense of duplicity that came with her presence giving him a feel for her exhaustion. With hardly any effort he wrenched out of her grasp and pulled his own wand out, quickly deflecting the disarming charm she sent his way.

Harry's myriad of curses had her on the defensive, her wand moving with precision to block or render harmless all his magic. She began to fight back, breaking the chair into several pieces and sending them flying at him with blinding speed.

Harry vanished them with a slight twirl of his wand and counteracted several other jinxes she had sent along with it, meeting her last curse with one of his own.

The two spells collided in midair and immediately began circling each other, their ugly dark grays turning into a golden ball that stretched tendrils of magic to both of their wands. Jamie stepped back in alarm, looking first at her violently bucking wand and then at her counterpart.

Harry remembered that she hadn't ever encountered the *priori incantatem*, the sacred connection between related wands that had saved his life during the Tri-Wizard Tournament. Her duel with Voldemort had never happened.

He steeled himself and began willing the knot of magic toward his other. Their magic was evenly matched, but Harry knew his desire for revenge couldn't be overcome. He thought of her betrayal, her desertion when he needed her most. He thought of the depths he had gone for her, the people he had killed and the lengths he had been driven to come this far. He thought of a grinning Draco Malfoy. Slowly, Jamie's wand began emitting whispers of smoke that grew into shadows of people taken by her magic.

A smallish witch, an elderly warlock, several goblins, a muggle looking couple, a Hogwarts student... Harry watched as Jamie backed away slowly, keeping her eyes fixed on his. The shades began swirling around her, their whispers echoing in the small room, calls of hatred, grief, and despair filling the air.

Her lips were tightly pressed together, her expression hardened against the slowly increasing dead, many of which began gathering around her, tugging at her cloak, screaming in her ears. Despite it all, Harry could feel the mounting worry and confusion warring with the brief stirrings of regret. With each shade his advantage grew, the crackling energy surging closer and closer to her, the vengeful beings of smoke howling in hatred and crashing against her without abandon. She finally looked away as a young, confused and betrayed looking Neville Longbottom appeared, his arms and legs oddly bent, his body a mess of blood. He had been her adopted brother – and the first casualty of her deadly ambition. The ball of magic was only inches away from the holly wand when Harry broke the connection and sent her back into the wall with a blast of magic.

She tried to resist his assault, yelling vainly as she knocked at his chest and pushed away, but Harry was stronger. He grabbed her hands and pinned them above her head, using his body to keep her still. In such close proximity he felt the absence of the corrupting magic that had given her so much strength. Jamie gave one last effort before collapsing back against the wall, closing her eyes.

Harry stared at her face, taking in the newly healed cuts marring her forehead and neck, the slight shadows under her eyes. He found himself oddly unable to speak, lost in the moment, in her presence. Her heavy breaths played against his face, and for a second he was overcome with the echoes of pain and heavy weariness that seemed to hang off her.

“Who did this to you?”

He knew the answer, really, but he couldn't help but ask. Jamie Potter couldn't have been much useful to Voldemort beyond being an asset in Hogwarts and a source of wealth to fund his many fronts. He had ruined both. Harry wondered if she would answer with his name.

She opened her eyes, the emerald green orbs capturing his own, and for a moment they stood there, just watching. Her lips pursed together, and she seemed to want to speak, but held herself back at the last moment. She seemed to struggle with something, looking away before speaking,

“Get off. *Get off.*” She resumed her efforts, desperately trying to shake Harry off, her magic flaring against his as she tried everything she knew to overcome her exhaustion and set herself free. Harry only gripped her arms tighter, overpowering her exertions and keeping her still. He missed the stinging hex she managed to cast wandlessly and let her arms go in the surprise attack.

She ducked under him and ran, sprinting to the window and launching herself through the already broken glass and landing on the fire escape. Harry shook off the pain and followed after her, simply blasting the entire wall away with a jab of his wand.

She was only a level or two below him, just beyond his reach. Harry stopped and leaned over the railing and took careful aim, unleashing

a reductor curse against the platform for the second floor. The metal was shredded under the blast, leaving a huge gap that Jamie barely avoided falling into. Looking up at his approaching figure, she climbed through the window and disappearing inside.

Harry quickly followed; finding himself inside another rundown apartment, chasing the sounds of his other's footsteps. He ran through the rooms, finding the open door to the hallway and cautiously peering out. He saw her running through the hallway, passing between the numerous tenants loitering around. They hissed at his presence and began scuttling toward him.

He cursed and bared his wand, fury filling his veins. A shredding curse cut down four at once, several killing curses knocking down the advancing horde. The rest were simply slammed into the ground with an angry slash, their bones shattering under the merciless assault. Harry advanced through the mounting bodies, severing limbs and utterly annihilating the possessed victims of Jamie's bewitchment.

He was almost through when he saw her come to a stop before the stairs, realizing the staircase was almost completely gone beneath them. She disappeared into yet another apartment, locking it behind her. Harry didn't bother slowing down, throwing his weight against it and breaking the flimsy lock.

She barely made it into another room before Harry took a hold of her from behind, wrapping his arms around hers and ripping her wand away. She howled and screamed, kicking against the bed in the room and throwing them both backwards, his back shattering a mirror set on top of a dresser. His grip only tightened, however, and soon he had lifted her and thrown her down onto the bed, one hand keeping her arms behind her and the other on the back of her head and pushing it down against the mattress.

Harry brought his lips down to her ear, enjoying her helplessness, the way she kept her eyes shut and struggled under him. "You've never been in this situation, have you? Never lost your dignity. Oh you've suffered, but never like *this* – " and with a smile he began tearing her off the cloak she had on.

He felt the fear in her, an emotion he had never truly felt her experience. The cloak fell to the floor, leaving only the thin, almost transparent robe she had been sleeping in before he had attacked.

“You made me into this. You did this by abandoning me, running off and... Oh, I bet this is something *Draco* could never do...” Her muffled voice made him laugh, and he reveled in the feeling of vulnerability emanating from their link. He had reached for her robes when he heard someone stumble in, rambling angrily as he ran through the apartment looking for them.

Harry turned around and brought his wand out just as the same teenage boy he had hanged before entered the bedroom. The wizard's neck was heavily bruised, the skin broken in several places. His eyes went wide as he saw Harry holding his counterpart down, and he threw his prayer beads in front of him to attack.

Harry was faster, and soon the wizard was overcome with a black streak of magic that hit him in the chest, knocking him back into the living room and perforating his chest. He let out a bubbling wheeze as he gasped for air, reaching for them powerlessly as he slowly died.

Harry looked back down at Jamie, who used the absence of his hands to jab him in the side and turn herself over under him, facing him. She went for his wand, but Harry hit her with a brutal backhand, almost wincing at the ghost of pain in his own cheek. She finally gave up with a shuddering breath, looking up into the ceiling with hard eyes.

He looked down at her for a few moments, wiping off small sliver of blood on her red lips. He pushed her shoulders down with his forearms and just watched her expression. He chuckled somewhat at the slowly diminishing noise from the dying boy.

“You fuck him too?”

Her eyes met his again, her chest heaving under his. With a shuddering breath she answered: “No, never. There was no one.”

His hands framed her face, one thumb on her cheekbone with the other tracing her scar, reveling in the soft haze of pleasure flowing from their bond. She began squirming under his touch, and before he

knew it his lips were crushing hers, fingers combing through hair. He pushed her further on to the bed, deepening the kiss, tasting the coppery tang of blood. She shrunk back from him for a few seconds before relaxing, her arms ceasing their pushing and gradually rising to circle his neck.

Harry's mind was in a whirl of *feeling*, swimming in the sensations that ran through their bodies. A hand disappeared under her robe, running up her thigh as she sighed in his mouth. Her breasts pressed against his chest as she tried to get up, turn him over, but Harry threw her back down. Her breaths turned ragged as his lips found her neck, his hand reached ever so higher...

She helped him shrug out his own clothes, and soon she was writhing beneath him as Harry took from her, legs wrapped tightly around him as their troubled thoughts melted away. She moaned in his ear, and they held each other as if they never wanted to let go, eyes shut as their minds were lost in the duplicity. In that moment, they could only think of one, their thoughts, their wants, their *needs* so intensely intertwined that they feel nothing else.

When the world drifted back into being, Harry found Jamie contently clinging to him, her endless locks of black hair fanning over his chest as she resting her head against his neck. Minutes passed before she slowly rolled off, lazily, almost regrettably, but Harry grabbed her back before she could leave, pressing her body back against his in an iron grip. He hadn't forgotten why had come.

"Tell your master I'm here if you haven't already. I'd like to meet him."

With that, he pushed her off and left the bed, throwing her wand at her and dressing himself quickly. He didn't bother saying anything else, favoring only a single glance before disappearing with a crack.

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Harry unlocked the front door of his Hogsmeade house several hours later and entered the single, dimly lit room, feeling, rather than seeing the trespasser within.

Lord Voldemort stood patiently near his desk, examining the messy stack of papers Harry had accumulated from his dealings with Gringotts. He didn't look up for several moments, tapping the receipts with his long, bone white wand, shuffling them into a perfect, orderly pile.

He finally straightened, fixing Harry with a contemplative gaze. "Harry Potter. Such a curiosity... You are the new beneficiary of Jamie Potter's inheritance. I hadn't believed the goblins."

Harry forced himself not to draw his wand, years of conditioned hatred rising like bile in his being. Yet, he found himself unable to resist staring back into the Dark Lord's red eyes.

"Ah, and well prepared. So similar to your... cousin. She looked me straight in the eyes for years and never mentioned another surviving Potter."

Voldemort pressed his lips together, moving closer to Harry. His chalk-white skin gleamed in the moonlight shining from the window, his wand hanging loosely from his grip.

"Imagine my surprise when suddenly, she *crawls* back to me, this *failure* of a servant telling me of the young man that ruined her chance at killing Albus Dumbledore. A young man that *defeats death*. Another who can survive the famed Killing Curse. That this *boy*, really, who has done the impossible, is of her blood."

He looked down at the silent Harry, his inhuman face utterly remorseless. "Had you not displayed this remarkable ability seemingly common among Potters, I would have killed you that very night. Tell me, young Potter, what made you seek your cousin so? Do you wish to save her? To redeem her dark soul? What is it that you wish?"

Harry finally spoke, unsurprised to find the sibilant hisses escaping his lips. The conversation had taken place in Parseltongue. "A trade. I'll take your mark. You'll be returned the source of wealth you enjoyed before as well."

Voldemort's nose flared, and he smiled coldly. "You *crave* her, Harry Potter, you crave her underneath all the hatred and frustration. Her mind didn't betray you willingly, not even when I stripped away all the ritual magic she held so dear, but even with all her concealment, I could *feel* the *want*."

He raised his wand, and Harry briefly became aware of the world changing around him, the shadows thickening, the light fading away into a distant oblivion. The ceiling seemed to disappear above him.

The Dark Lord reached into the dark and pulled out a battered looking Jamie, her face fresh with new cuts and bruises, her body trembling worse than ever before.

"I have to say, Harry, I don't understand. What do you *seek* in her? She has no more money, no honor, no special qualities that make her worth your *lust*. She has only a promise of power and a mind more vicious and traitorous than any I've met.

Voldemort gripped her chin with a clawlike hand, tipping her head up and using his wand to brush the black hair from her defeated face. He clucked to himself, rubbing off some of the dirt on her cheek, enjoying the way she shut her eyes in fear at his presence. "...Though, I suppose she's a pretty thing..."

Harry's hands gripped his wand tightly, his muscles tensing in the surge of hatred flowing through him. He knew Voldemort couldn't kill him, the prophecy binding Harry's life to another dark wizard, but there was little chance he could stop the Dark Lord from hurting his other. He didn't understand – it wasn't hatred, not really, nor was it just lust...

The elder wizard grabbed Jamie's hand and placed his wand tip at her forearm, where the dark mark sat burned into her skin. Without so much as an incantation, he tore it off, the black magic pooling out of her skin returning to his wand. Jamie gasped and convulsed weakly at the pain, causing him to step forward in concern.

Voldemort chuckled at Harry's anger, shoving her toward him. She stumbled into his arms, and he caught her before her legs buckled. Echoes of the cruciatus passed through his body at the contact.

“Don’t worry, Harry. She’s all *yours*, no worse for wear.”

Harry ignored him, looking over his fragile looking other, struck by the pain resonating through their bond. He checked her pulse, running his hands over her face, reaching for the countless little bruises marring her porcelain skin.

“And you’ll have plenty of time for that, I think, much later.” Voldemort stepped over Jamie’s body and grabbed his arm tightly, sneering down at him as his nails pierced skin. “Now *bow*.”

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Harry’s arm burned and burned, the sickly magic seeping into his skin, violating his being. A stumbling Jamie Potter barely managed to stand as he half-dragged her out of the Hogsmeade house, out into the thick rain of the summer evening.

Her fingers clung to his soaked cloak, her head pressed tiredly against his side, drenched hair hanging limply around her face. She looked up at him, dim emerald eyes watching his face with a mixture of pity and anger.

“Traded one master for another, Harry?”

He tore off her hands and dropped her to the wet gravel walkway, ignoring her in favor of a glance to the forest. Jamie watched him silently from the ground, too hurt to move.

Beyond the trees, the Order of the Phoenix began walking out of the darkness. Several red robed figures approached from every direction.

Jamie looked around them, sending a confused look to her other. She pulled herself to her side and made to reach for her wand before realizing it was gone.

From the path to Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore appeared, his face grim, robes an unc customary grey. Harry stepped forward to meet the Headmaster, handing him a polished holly wand much like his own.

The old wizard broke the wand in two without a second thought, eyes hardening at the grief-stricken sound of his former student. He looked Harry over, pocketing the remains of the magical instrument. "That was a heavy sacrifice, Mr. Potter."

Harry looked back at his miserable looking other. She tried vainly to tear her arms away from the Order members pulling her to her feet, realizing the horror of her situation. He didn't bother replying.

Dumbledore put his hand on his shoulder, blue eyes watching him gravely. "I hope, my boy, that this is not the last time we work on the same side." Harry shrugged him off.

"Don't try to stop me." He left him standing alone, moving back to Jamie. Harry signaled the Order members to pause for a moment, leaving her hanging between two heavysset Aurors with official Ministry badges. She reached for him, uttering his name pleadingly. Harry ruthlessly crushed the swell of emotion inside him.

He bent over, whispering into her ear. "You're right, I did trade masters. But at least I had a choice." He brought his thumb to trace her scar, mesmerized for a few moments. "I'll be back for what's mine."

She screamed at him, voiceless anger and rage that intermingled with pleas for him to stop. Harry turned around, leaving them to take her away. He kept his eyes on a grim looking Dumbledore, ignoring the voice that tore at his mind, even after the cracks that indicated her departure.

"Remember your oath." And with that, Harry Potter disappeared.

Equal and Opposite

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the greatest pursuits in life begin and end in front of a mirror

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Epilogue

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Eight years.

It had been eight years since she had been confined to the endless greens of the Longbottom Estate, eight years since she had been sentenced to indefinite house arrest and expulsion from the magical world.

Jamie supposed it had been better than the alternatives – Azkaban, or worse, the Kiss. Dumbledore had intervened strangely on her behalf, firmly calling for a punishment that would be better suited to a misguided seventeen year old witch with delusional dreams of becoming a dark lady.

And in reflection, that's all it had been. Fanciful thoughts of grandeur that had filled her mind and turned her to powerful dark magic... curses and charms to assert her power over her housemates, to seek the authority over life itself...

She breathed in sharply, distant sensations of years past filling her mind. No. She didn't miss it. She didn't miss the corrupting influence, the malevolence inherent in each and every spell, the temptation that had led her to a life of evil. It was a mistake of the past. She had been *strong*, but young... foolish. And now she had no wand, no rights to even wield one. She missed her magic so deeply it hurt.

"Jamie!"

She turned to her adoptive grandmother, Augusta Longbottom, who stood at the foot of the stairs.

“Finish cleaning the portraits and prepare some tea for guests.” She eyed her white summer dress, pausing to straighten the hem of her skirt and dust off a sleeve. Satisfied, she cupped Jamie’s cheek and smiled warmly at her. “Pretty as always. Perhaps we’ll have some luck this time.”

Jamie’s face dimmed somewhat, and she turned back to the portrait of Augusta’s maternal grandfather - her favorite - brushing away the dust accumulating on the fading canvas.

When she’d been caught, the story of her attack on Dumbledore had leaked to the public. Her reputation had been utterly ruined, torn apart by editorials decrying her betrayal to her parents, England, and all the people who had died at Voldemort’s hand.

The trial had been long and drawn out, marred by charges of special treatment, arguments over whether to try her as an adult or minor, or whether she qualified for the Kiss simply for her joining of Voldemort. Her lack of a Dark Mark helped her immensely, allowing her to avoid much of the formal charges of crimes against Wizardkind.

Her public defender had assured her she had been fortunate, but the real damage had been done. She was universally hated and confined to the residence of a retainer – be it family, or, as the judge had described, amused by the impossibility, any husband that would take over the *burden*. Worse, she had no hope of ever wielding any magic beyond her feeble wandless spells.

Jamie moved to the kitchen, filling a pot with water and lighting a small fire on the stove to boil it. Nothing was done with magic in the house anymore, not even common household tasks. Her grandmother had done away with her own wand after her first attempt to steal it and escape.

The first two years had been difficult. She had raged and lashed out at everything, killing their new elf and destroying half the living room before a fierce Augusta had stunned her. She’d made countless tries at running away, using brooms, apparition, and even portkeys she’d managed to steal from guests. Nothing worked. She had even ran, simply dashing into the never-ending grassland, only to find herself

arriving back at the quaint house she would eventually grow old and waste away in.

Acceptance had settled in after three years of inactivity, of a simple, quiet life she never thought could get used to. Her aging grandmother raised her from sleep at dawn, giving her fresh groceries to make breakfast with, and if she were lucky, perhaps a paper for her to read. The news had grown more and more vague as the years went by, but she could sense the grim cloud of danger hanging over the people and world she remembered from years past.

Lord Voldemort had struck at every corner of society, carving for himself entire regions of the nation where no Ministry official dared to go. Worse, there was news of another dark wizard, a powerful upstart that ruthlessly attacked both sides.

Jamie watched the bubbling water, leaving it boil for a few more seconds before taking it off the stove. She could hear her grandmother moving around furniture in the foyer, groaning slightly as she knelt to clean.

Augusta wouldn't be around forever. Perhaps she would live another ten or so years, but even she would eventually die. Her guardianship would fall to the Ministry, who would undoubtedly put her in prison.

They never spoke of it, but Jamie knew how much her grandmother worried her adopted daughter would face such a hopeless fate. No man would ever take the disgraced girl-who-lived as a wife, to take over the responsibilities of her confinement. It would be a mockery of a married life. All of Augusta's guests seemed to agree, for they never returned.

Her eyes were invariably drawn to the black haired man in the portrait she had last cleaned. The long-dead Potter was her own ancestor as well, depicted as a handsome young man that bore the typical features of her family.

She heard her grandmother welcome in a guest into the house, speaking to him in hushed tones. She stayed out of sight, avoiding the view of whatever possible husband Augusta had turned up. The

feeling of disappointment was too much to bear – it was easier to simply ignore it all.

Minutes passed by, and she tended to the tea dutifully, knowing full well manners and decorum could only help her plight.

A powerful explosion suddenly rocked the house, knocking her back into the countertops. Her head hit something hard, and she found herself fighting through a haze. Gripping the edge of the counter, she pulled herself to the feet, recognizing a long shriek of terror that began piercing her slowly recovering ears.

Grabbing a long kitchen knife, she moved cautiously out of the kitchen, the intense battles of her Hogwarts years suddenly returning to her. She peered around the corner to see a grey robed wizard pocketing a long, official looking piece of paper and search the house, stepping over a frightened and heavily bound looking Augusta. The entire side of the house was consumed in debris and a small, raging fire that she supposed was meant to draw her out.

Jamie darted to the dining room, a small space she could try to trap one of the wizards in. The moment she entered the lavishly decorated room, an arm grabbed her from behind. She snapped her elbow back at the man, gratified to hear the grunt of pain. Breaking free, she lunged forward with the knife.

The man slapped the feeble attack away and threw her on the set table, sending her crashing through dozens of precious family china. Without magic she knew she was helpless, but she refused to die willingly. Her cheek stung sharply as a shard cut through the skin, bringing a measure of fury running through her veins.

She threw the broken pieces at the man's face and darted past him, hoping to overwhelm the second wizard before he joined the first. A binding hex hit her from the side as the other wizard stepped from the kitchen.

Jamie watched her captors fearfully, wondering if this was the Ministry coming to take her away, or Lord Voldemort deciding he had to finally tend to the issue of the prophecy. It wasn't inconceivable that he had finally learned the full message.

Instead of killing her or apparating her away, however, they set her on her feet and pushed her out the front door and down the porch stairs. The second wizard promptly sealed the house shut and set the rest of her home on fire.

Some distance away from the field stood a young man not older than twenty-five, roughly similar in appearance to the portrait from before. Her heart seemed to seize at the sight of her other.

He had consumed her thoughts for what seemed like an eternity, a specter of hope, of hatred, of frustration and other feelings she couldn't bear to think of. Her scar had been maddeningly silent since their last meeting, not a single twinge to reflect his survival or wellbeing. It had taken her years for her to stop seeing him everywhere, for her to no longer wake up slick with sweat and need, to cease looking desperately into every mirror of the house until Augusta had proceeded to shatter every single one...

He stood infuriatingly still, emerald eyes watching her slowly advance. The taint of dark magic filled the air around him, staining him, the thrum of its power exuding from his very gaze. She couldn't help it, couldn't stop her unconscious movement toward him. She didn't even notice her bonds falling away as she reluctantly closed the gap between them, hating herself for it.

"Come to gloat, Harry?" His mere name made her scar tingle, and suddenly, as if a great barrier had broken, she felt his presence once more, his being only a mere thought away, just at the edge of her conscious mind. "Have you come to enjoy your victory?"

Harry didn't respond. She knew he enjoyed this, felt the cruel fulfillment, the utter pleasure of seeing her stripped of everything she held dear, above all, her magic – the very defining character of her existence. Eight years of her life. He had taken it all.

Jamie found herself mere inches away from him, finally in reach, and in that moment she wanted nothing more to move just another step closer...

She couldn't help the way she moved close against him, the way she lifted herself onto her toes and tilted her head up, asking for, *begging*

for him. She couldn't help the guilty pleasure that mixed with the shame of it all, the giddy excitement of his indulgence that had her clinging urgently to his chest, couldn't help the soft sigh of disappointment when he finally pulled away.

She dropped her head, feeling utterly used and pathetic, head filled with warring emotions of loathing and contentment.

He put one thumb on her scar, tracing it lightly as she closed her eyes in gratification, lost in the thick haze of his being. His other thumb traced her cheekbone, running it over the cut the grey robed wizards had caused. There was only a brief flash of something unpleasant before he raised his wand. Jamie barely felt the sickly, revolting energy of the Killing Curse leave the wand twice in rapid succession, scarcely heard the cries of betrayal before they were cut short.

Harry put his finger under her chin and lifted her head to look her in the eyes, his words predatory - simple and curt. "I told you I'd return for what was *mine*."

The words reverberated in her, and Jamie knew she should have felt protest at this wicked image of herself laying claim to her being. Instead she basked in the slight daze of his ministrations. She idly followed his finger down to his arm, where the sleeve of his robe had fallen down to expose smooth, unmarked skin where the Dark Mark should have been. The servant had become the master.

Her other withdrew his touch abruptly, reaching into his robes and produced a familiar Holly and phoenix feathered wand, an identical one to her own. On the hilt was carved H.J.P., their initials. He pressed it into her hand.

She took it with wonder, a true smile washing away the rest of her ill will as a ribbon of magic curled around her arm, tiny motes of light filling the air around them. She laughed happily, swishing his wand with pure joy. Behind her, the house burned and crumbled, the screams of a burning grandmother long forgotten.

Jamie finally returned her attention to Harry, looking up at her quiet other with confusion. "My wand was broken. This is yours, isn't it? What will you use?"

Harry produced a bone white, yew wand, slighter longer than his own. He pressed the tip along her cheek, the cut healing instantly. He took her hand, his warm fingers interlocking with her own, and Jamie felt him prepare for apparition.

She suddenly understood. Her role had not yet been fulfilled.

With a crack, they disappeared, Equal and Opposite once more.